AAUW Prescott (AZ) Branch

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Thumb Sketch — AAUW Prescott, AZ

Newsletter May-June 2024, Vol. 73 No.3

President's Message

Carol Dosse, President

"So long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Goodbye"

No, I'm not climbing a mountain to leave Prescott or AAUW, but this is my last Thumb Sketch message as your President.

It's been an eventful and successful year. We began by searching for a new meeting space, using criteria that encompassed all our needs. The Center for Spiritual Living has been an accessible, affordable solution. We gathered there in September to connect and highlight our successful Interest Groups.

A lovely Brunch at Prescott Lakes Country Club in December gave us the opportunity for a group photograph. It was featured at the wonderful 75th Anniversary Celebration in January honoring our impressive history while bringing together our strongest element: our members.

The Scholarship team began a new Opportunity Award, which now has over $1300. available for one-time educational opportunities for local women.

The "small bites, big cake" team structure has been a successful way to utilize our collective talents. Team projects include: finding a new meeting space and planning the anniversary celebration as well as past community projects such as Reality Store. The Communication and Scholarship teams are great examples of successful teamwork. The Board continues to be committed to strengthening our branch.

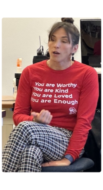
The recent survey results show many members would prefer to be involved in a short-term team. New opportunities will build on our current successes.

I want to thank every member for their contribution to such a successful branch. Together we have all done our part: as a current or past board member, participating in a project or interest group, attending meetings, and financial support. Every member should be proud of their part. I'm certainly proud of us all!

Personally, I am honored to have been your President. AAUW-Prescott has introduced me to my community and all it has to offer. I've found wonderful friendships and personal connections. I look forward to my future in Prescott and our AAUW branch.

Upcoming Programs

General Meeting: May 11



Our guest speaker for the May 11th General Meeting will be **Courtney Osterfelt**, the founder and Director of the Launch Pad. The Launch Pad provides Yavapai County teens with educational and social opportunities that encourage learning, active community involvement, and skills development to become successful, empowered, contributing members of our society. Courtney will share her personal story of why and how she founded this all-inclusive, youth-driven space for local teens. This is a presentation you will not want to miss.

General Meeting: June 8

Saturday, June 8th is our end-of-year social gathering in the **Yavapai College Sculpture Garden**. As we gather to discuss the year gone by and look ahead to next year, Victoria Sweet, the Director of the Del E. Webb Family Enrichment Center, will guide small group tours through the facility. The center is a child development center located on the Prescott Campus of Yavapai College that offers a safe, nurturing child-centered program which focuses on promoting children's learning. AAUW Prescott's Mary Alice Moulton Childcare Assistance Fund supports childcare tuition for selected students/mothers attending Yavapai College.

Join us to meet with your fellow members, discuss your summer plans, learn about one of our supported groups (FEC), and generally relax in the lovely sculpture garden, surrounded by art and nature.

AAUW-Prescott General Meeting location to change in October 2024

While preparing the budget for FY2024-2025, the cost of space rental was a major concern. The board determined that, if we could save on the cost of our meeting space, we could focus more on our mission. Locating such a meeting space has became a very appealing way to save money. Recently we were introduced to another location for our meetings that will not cost us, and we can now enjoy our coffee and tea during the meetings.

Our new location starting with our October 12th General Meeting:

Hope Ev. Lutheran Church
231 Smoke Tree Lane
Prescott, AZ

Smoke Tree Lane connects Prescott Lakes Parkway and Willow Creek Road.

The **September 14th Welcome Back meeting will be in the Yavapai College Sculpture Garden.** Our interest groups will have the opportunity to entice new participants and share their stories.

As we reflect on the last 8 months using The Center for Spiritual Living campus as our General Meeting location, we must say we have enjoyed having a kitchen where we could enjoy our coffee and tea. Sometimes we arrived a bit early to chat with friends and to meet our new members.

The Hope Ev. Lutheran Church, just like the Center for Spiritual Living, will have a large kitchen, tables and chairs for conversation, several convenient restrooms, lots of parking and the price is right. The Center for Spiritual Living has been very hospitable, and the meeting areas have been lovely. Thank you CSL

Mark your calendars AAUW's October 12th General Meeting will be at Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church, 231 Smoke Tree Lane, Prescott.

Recap of April General Meeting

'Not All Who Serve Our Country Wear Uniforms'

Retold by Sue Morceau

Life dealt college-age Jo Zutell a wrenching turn 30 years ago, when her husband of three years explained that his teaching career had lost its charm and that he would be re-joining the U.S. military in an officer training program.

So began Jo's unanticipated and challenging career as a military wife. Left to navigate a rigid military hierarchy and required behaviors, she also managed the couple's household and raised their two-year-old daughter.

Jo described her military immersion to attendees at the April General Meeting through a presentation titled "Not All Who Serve Our Country Wear Uniforms."

In those early days of the Viet Nam era, the hierarchy of the military wives relegated the spouse of the highest ra,nking officer to pouring coffee, the next up to serving tea, and wives in Jo's position to cleaning up during base events. The wives were expected to show up in hats, gloves, hose and heels.

Life became a never-ending series of deployments, household relocations, expectations of military wives, service leaves, and family reunions. Wives were on the lowest rungs of the ladder. The roller coaster stopped only after her husband's retirement with honors 24 years later. The couple will celebrate 62 years of marriage in June 2024.

Meanwhile, Jo had taken charge of her circumstances and finished her own advanced education to become a licensed marriage and family therapist. She earned a Bachelor's degree, completed a Master's program, wrote her thesis, and participated in an internship at universities across multiple states.

While struggling with severe medical complications after the birth of her second child, Jo had received emotional support from the American Red Cross (ARC).

"They saved me," she said. Thus, when the ARC sought individuals with her training to assist with disaster relief and service to the Armed Forces Resiliency Program, she jumped at the opportunities.

Jo Zutell

One of Jo's service specialties is Reconnection Workshops, which help service members, veterans, and their families "improve their wellbeing through skills based on different topics, including communication, anger, stress, depression and trauma," she explained. "Attendees practice using foundational tools from which they can improve personal and family wellness."

"It is not teaching, not lecturing, and not therapy," Jo stated. "We facilitate individuals in small groups to help one another by giving them the boost they need to handle situations on their own."

Programs are offered for adults, as well as children aged 5 to 18. For more information, contact Laura Yoon at 480-349-4722 or visit redcross.org/military .

AAUW Prescott Business

2024-2025 AAUW Prescott Board

Bottom Row: Pat Mann, Kelli Klosterman, Barb Michelman, Mari Rimple, Margie Crider, Eileen Cotter, Miriam Haubrich, Kathryn Madden, and Edi Taylor-Richards.
Top Row: Janet Orr, Cathy Cunningham, Jet Sletten, Elaine Poole, Lenore Hemphill, and Penny Briner Ewell.

Future AAUW Field Trips

Beginning this summer, AAUW will be organizing area field trips to help our membership learn more about our community and surrounds. Field trips will be held independent from our monthly general meeting, so the two will not compete for the Saturday morning time frame. Though no scheduling has been finalized, there are a couple of suggestions on the table for venues to visit, including the Mountain Artists Guild, the Chino Valley Campus of Yavapai College. and the Museum of Indigenous People. If you have suggestions for an outing, please contact Jet Sletten via email or text and watch the website and your emails for dates and times.

"And the Survey Says…"

Submitted by Penny Briner Ewell

Thank you to the members who completed our 2024 online survey. The information provided will help plan programming and projects that reflect our AAUW membership. Your input is greatly appreciated.

The 2024 survey endeavored to determine membership engagement and attitudes toward future programming and community outreach. Analysis of respondents' answers across the survey illuminated some general themes which are included here. If you'd like to see the full results of the survey, it is provided by clicking here.

Engagement: Participation in the branch can be measured in numerous ways, including, but not limited to: completing the survey, interest group participation, attendance at general meetings, serving on the board, past volunteerism, and willingness to volunteer in the future.

- 33 of our 145 members completed the survey or about 23%. This is considered an acceptable response rate, but an organizational rate of 50% or more would indicate an engaged membership.
- 67% of respondents have been members of AAUW for over five years. This could indicate greater engagement than those who have been members for fewer years. The pandemic might explain this and/or there may be fewer opportunities to participate outside of general meetings as well.
- 26 respondents indicated that friendship/community was one reason they continued being a member. Interest groups and supporting the AAUW mission also are reasons for continued participation as indicated by 22 respondents for each.
- Of the respondents, 62.5% indicated they almost always attend general meetings. According to our membership team, in the past year, we averaged 41 members at the general meeting or 28% participation. This indicates that those who completed the survey tend to be more engaged in this aspect of the branch than our general membership and/or were in attendance at the meeting when the survey was discussed. The email about the survey was sent, however, to the entire branch.
- Friends/neighbors and interest groups continue to be a means of attracting members and also a reason for members' continuing to participate. 76% of respondents indicated they belonged to at least one interest group. Of those, 59% indicated they knew how to start a new interest group. Two respondents or 8% indicated they were willing to start a new group.
- 65.5% of respondents would like to see social events outside of general meetings and interest groups. Eight people indicated a willingness to host an event.
- The survey respondents indicated they are willing to buddy with new members or attend a new member event, acknowledging the importance of personal connection.
- Education, legislation pertaining to women, non-profit organizations, and environmental issues are the topics most cited as being of interest.

Volunteerism: This is one measure of engagement. For several years we have had difficulty filling our board positions. Yet, in the past, we have had many successful community action endeavors, as well as a greater variety of interest groups. Volunteerism deserves its own summary.

- Community Action/Public Policy/Scholarships: 83.9% of respondents said they had participated in a community action project in the past. 70% said they *might participate in the future depending on the project*, while 12% said they would participate.
- Scholarships/Opportunity Award: 72% indicated they would not be on the scholarship committee while the remainder indicated yes or that they *might volunteer for a specific project.*
- Volunteering to Serve: 19 respondents indicated they *would volunteer for a short-term* project while only 8 indicated they would serve on the board, a longer-term commitment. Assisting at a general meeting (13), writing an article for the newsletter (10), speaking at a meeting (6), and/or hosting a social event (8) all garnered some support. These are short-term commitments. Other responses are in the full survey.
- Interest Groups: 59% of respondents knew the process for starting a new interest group, while 41% did not. Two respondents indicated they would be willing to start a new group.

One way to view these survey results is rather negatively: not many women participated; less than a quarter of our members are speaking for all our members; engagement is low in most areas; nobody wants to volunteer. The other way to look at these results is from a positive angle. **We as a board hear you**:

- **"Small bites, big cake"!!** The 75th-anniversary celebration brought together a committee of women who volunteered and completed individual tasks. It was a successful event. The survey indicates that this is a theme. When planning for social, community action, public policy, scholarship/opportunity award programs, and events, we need to think in terms of short-term commitment. Volunteer opportunities will be offered regularly. We hear you!
- **Recruitment of new members:** Survey questions about how women heard about AAUW, and why they joined and continue to be members are important for recruitment. There is a new energy in our membership team. We recently joined the Prescott Chamber of Commerce. Through the Chamber, we've received publicity and contact with other organizations. We plan to join the Prescott Valley Chamber next year. AAUW was featured in Prescott Woman magazine last fall, and in the most recent issue, they included our 75th anniversary news release complete with photo. The membership team and the strategic planning committee are discussing other recruitment ideas. Individual comments on the survey reflect the need for not only new members but for different members to move the organization forward. We hear you!
- **Living our mission:** The AAUW board is committed to membership recruitment and living our mission through new public policy and community action initiatives, as well as continuing our scholarship/opportunity award program. This not only builds on what we have but allows for the creation of additional opportunities with short-term commitments that elevate member engagement and service. We hear you!

Once again, thank you to those who participated in the survey. You are appreciated. The board is always open to hearing from our members — in fact, we **need** to hear from you. If there is anyone who didn't have the opportunity to complete the survey, you may still do so by following this link.

In Memoriam

Memories of Sara Jane Wolters

Sara Wolters

I am sorry for all of you who did not know Sara Wolters. She died on Easter Sunday at 86 years. Sara was clever, witty, talented, and dedicated to her passions. As Melinda Anderson recalls, "I first met Sara through the photography group and was immediately drawn to her wit, her intellect, her wealth of stories and experiences, her quirkiness and her indomitable spirit."

Her long life took her from Oregon to Europe and Africa, and back to Washington State, California, Hawaii, Arizona and finally New Mexico. Already a member AAUW in South Lake Tahoe, CA, Sara joined the Prescott Branch in 2007 and quickly offered her many talents for the benefit of AAUW. Active in Photography, Great Decisions, Crafts, and Book interest groups, she also was involved in Community Action events and Public Policy. Among her leadership roles, were President of AAUW Arizona, Finance Chair at AZ State, and Recording Secretary for our Prescott Branch, and in 2014, Sara was awarded Prescott's Mover and Shaker Award.

Sara had so many layers of skills and talents: Patience while traveling with some obsessive photographers, photography, and picture framing, seamstress to the wives of diplomats in Africa, making jewelry, cooking unusual meals, and baking bread. As Marge Rubin remembers about cooking, Sara always said "A recipe is just a suggestion." She had a passion for ice cream and Sara told me that she liked to enjoy a glass of champagne while vacuuming! What a way to enjoy a chore. We laughed at her many homespun axioms she offered to guide us when we might wonder what to do— And she taught us to swear in Dutch—

Mover and Shaker Award

Sara's daughter Gwyn has requested in lieu of flowers, to donate in her memory to the Lewy Body Dementia Association.

An avid reader who kept a log of every book she read, Sara loaned me the book "The Dead Beat" written by Marilyn Johnson, an obituary writer for a newspaper. Instead of a chronological recounting of someone's life, the best writers of obits captured the bits of the essence of the person as revealed by their passions and/or quirks. That was my intention, here. How'd I do, Sara?

Submitted by Stephanie Brown

AAUW Arizona

Becky Gunn, AAUW Arizona President

Spring Forum'24 was held on April 13th in Sun City West, Arizona hosted by the Northwest Valley Branch. The focus of the day was on Issues in Education in Arizona. Over 50 individuals attended and participated and some when asked "How was the day?" – they responded: "FABULOUS."

The Planning Committee consisted of Karen Ramos, Jane Adrian, Betsy Flaten, Beth Zdeblick, Marge Whitman, and Becky Gunn. Many thanks to those who pulled this event together.

The day began with coffee and min-muffins followed by the Keynote Speaker, **Kathi Harper** from the California State AAUW Public Policy Committee. She addressed the many issues facing education, school boards, educators, and parents today. She specifically spoke about Book Banning, Curriculum Restrictions, and School Board meetings and elections. She encouraged attendance at School Boards and helped elect School Board members who promote sound educational practices.

Later in the morning, there was a panel focused on the **ESA Voucher** program in Arizona consisting of four individuals each with different perspectives on ESA's. **Kathy Boltz** is a parent of a disabled ESA student who has been a recipient of an ESA voucher since 2017. Her focus was on the financial and academic accountability of the current ESA program. **Nicky Indicavitch** is the *Statewide Outreach Director for Save our Schools Arizona*. Her perspective considered the issues related to the impact on funding for Public Schools due to the expanded ESA program, the impact on the quality of education, and the lack of accountability in the program, including the possibility of fraud in the system. **Jennifer Pawlik** is a state representative from District 17 who has served on both the House Education and Judiciary Committees. Her focus was on the lack of clarity in the laws passed for ESA's and the lack of the ability for both parties to work together to reach compromises particularly related to financial accountability. **Clark Tenney**, *Superintendent for Prescott Unified School District*, spoke about the impact that ESAs have on funding public education in Arizona. Arizona is presently ranked 50th in school funding in the country. Only Idaho has worse funding per student. He spoke of the reduction in Kindergarten participation and how many students may return to the public school unprepared for their grade level which impacts not only fellow students but requires teachers to provide additional support for those students.

It was stressed during the panel discussion that ESAs initially served an important purpose when they were implemented in 2011, but that has eroded with 'universal' vouchers.

What can be done about the financial and academic accountability issues is largely based in the process of electing Arizona State House and Senate representatives with a greater commitment to Public Schools.

The annual meeting had a 'State of the State of Arizona AAUW' message from President Becky Gunn, followed by recognition of outgoing State Board members: Karen Ramos (Communications Director), Jane Adrian (Interim Public Policy Chair), and Suzanne James (Recording Secretary). It was announced that the State now has new official co-chairs for Public Policy – Betsy Flaten and Beverly Byrd from the East Mesa Branch.

Elections were held and new State officers were installed:
Karen Ramos – President-Elect (Scottsdale)
Marge Whitman – Program Co-Vice President (Northwest Valley)
Susan Jennings – Program Co-Vice President (Northwest Valley)
Dr. Linda Thor – Recording Secretary (Phoenix)
Marjorie Haberman – Communications Director (Northwest Valley)

Membership

Mari Rimple, Membership Co-VP

Sonya Tenney, Membership Co-VP

It is May, and that means it is time to renew your membership **before June 30th.** We have recently changed our renewal procedures. We ask that you renew your membership and pay your dues on the national AAUW site. Please log in to https://www.aauw.org, select "Login" and pay with a credit card directly through the national website. As you complete the membership form on branch (AZ0009).

You should also receive an email in the next few weeks prompting you to renew your membership. **Don't wait, act now!** As it was last year, membership costs $105 ($72 to National; $9 to State; and $24 to our branch). Your dues support legislative initiatives promoting gender equality, research, and dissemination of information on the national level. As you complete the membership form please indicate that you want to join the local Prescott branch (AZ0009). Your dues locally help our Prescott branch to provide the programs we enjoy each month.

Membership will have a computer at our general meeting in May for anyone who needs help navigating the new payment sequence online. You can always contact Sonya Tenney or Mari Rimple for assistance, as well.

Community Engagement

Some AAUW Prescott members joined the parade around the Yavapai County Courthouse in downtown Prescott during the Prescott Women's March, Saturday, March 9, 2024.

Interest Groups

Everybody Loves An Interest Group!!

The vast majority of our members participate in at least one interest group. Many members say they joined AAUW for these groups, and they continue to be members because of this participation. Interest groups are a great way to meet and socialize with other members, engage in stimulating conversation, and even develop a greater understanding of AAUW.

Even though we are about to wrap up our 2023-24 AAUW year, now is the perfect time to begin thinking about starting a group for next year. According to our recent survey, only about 50% of the respondents know how to start a new interest group.

If you are thinking about starting an interest group, you need a minimum of five interested members. Contact the President-elect for next year, Jet Sletten. She will then fill out the paperwork for board approval. That's all there is to it! Happy planning!

Travel Discussion Group

Join the Travel Discussion Group on May 14, 2024, at 1:30 pm at the Prescott Public Library, Founders Suite B. Let's start thinking about travel to some peaceful part of the globe: Japan and Korea plus South East Asia – Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines.

Mah Jongg

We teach American Mah Jongg!

Our Mah Jongg interest group invites you to learn how to play this challenging game. We will be glad to teach you how to use the National Mah Jongg card. If you already know how to play, we invite you to join us to play Mah Jongg.

We play for two hours at the mall every Tuesday afternoon. You don't have to commit to coming every week – players come when they can, If you have any questions or wish to join us, contact Edi Taylor-Richards or Laury Shayne.

Mah Jongg

Directions to the Center for Spiritual Living, the location of AAUW Saturday General Meetings. The Center for Spiritual Living is at 3755 Willow Creek Road. If you are coming from Pioneer Parkway, turn left at Haas Blvd. opposite Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. If you are traveling on Willow Creek Road, turn right on Haas Blvd. then another right into the large parking lot.

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