



## Northwoods News - September 2022

### MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS ANDREA AND LINDA

We're nearing the end of summer (let's face it) with typical Northern Minnesota optimism that we will have a long, colorful fall. We're also looking forward to an exciting year of AAUW Ely branch programs, events and get-togethers with friends.

Summer was busy for our branch, starting in June with two Title IX celebration events, one at Tuesday Group and the other at Hidden Valley in collaboration with Ely EMPOWER. It was uplifting to see speakers ranging in age from grade school into their 80s who have realized the benefits of the 1972 legislation. Member Autumn Cole did an amazing job of coordinating the events and recruited the perfect speakers for each event.

In July, we held our annual Garden Party at Barb Soderberg's beautiful home and gardens. Kay Vandervort coordinated the event once again. And a big thank you to all of you who purchased silent auction items and raffle tickets and contributed to the delicious potluck lunch. The event raised more than \$2,500 that can be used for scholarships, STEM workshops and programs that support the AAUW mission. Most importantly, we received thirteen new branch members from this event! Thank you, Kay and Barb and all who made the Garden Party a success!

Additional highlights from the 2021-22 year include:

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- A presentation at Tuesday Group by Senator Mary Kunesh sponsored by the Ely branch along with Ely EMPOWER on the topic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relations. The turnout at the community event was excellent.
- Sponsored a visit from Professor Emeritus of American Indian Studies and Bois Forte member Linda LeGarde Grove, who did a reading of her new book at Piragis, spoke at Tuesday Group, visited with elementary school students and held a writing workshop at the Ely Folk School.
- Secured a Strategic Action Grant to continue the “Awareness.....Then Change” branch initiative to bring attention to issues in the Native American community.
- Picked up trash along Highway 169 as part of the Adopt-a-Highway program in October and June.
- Sponsored and facilitated a STEM workshop at VCC for girls in grades 5 to 8.
- Sponsored two young women at a 3-day leadership conference.
- With EMPOWER, sponsored three girls to attend a 4-day Engineering Camp at Itasca Community College.
- Enjoyed informative and fun programs at our branch meetings each month.

Heading into the fall, we look forward to another enjoyable, informative and activist 2022-23. We strive to focus on the AAUW mission of supporting equity for all girls and women in the areas of economic security, educational opportunities and leadership among many others. We ask that our members put the following dates on their calendars:

- Tuesday, September 20 – Unhappy Hour at Northern Grounds from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. This year we will focus on our BIPOC sisters and the differential in pay based on race. We will finally have the drawing for the beautiful Equality Quilt that Autumn Cole created to support pay equity.
- Tuesday, October 4 - our branch is sponsoring Mak Mars from PAVSA (Program Advocating for Victims of Sexual Assault) from Duluth who will speak at Tuesday Group on the problem of domestic and sexual assault in the Native American community.
- October 8 - The Great Northland Get-Together in Brainard. (Please see the complete description in the newsletter.)

In October, the Board will review the Strategic Plan and determine where we should be focusing our efforts to move forward with the AAUW Mission and Values. The plan will then be shared with the branch for your discussion and input.

Finally, we look forward to seeing all our new and (less new) members at our first branch meeting on September 13 at the GEL at 5:30 pm! Come at 5:00 for a half hour of social time. Hope to see you there.

Linda and Andrea

## Calendar of meetings and events

**BRANCH MEETINGS** for 2022-2023 are as follows:

**September 13th – Two Truths and a Lie**

- Meet and Greet of members, led by Peggy Stolley

**October 11th – Women Artists**

- Nancy Ensley (Zoom or in person TBD)

**November 8th – Women and Music**

- Marcia Homer, Jean Gendreau, Sally Koski

**December 13th – Holiday Celebration**

- Silent Auction, Dinner

**January 10th – TBD**

- Jan Guerin leading a book discussion OR Planned Parenthood speaker

**February 14th – Keys to Happiness**

- Autumn Cole

**March 14th – TBD**

- Jan Guerin leading a book discussion OR Planned Parenthood speaker

**April 11th – Annual Meeting**

- No program

**May 8th - End of the Year Meeting**

- Banquet, Silent Auction

Program Committee: Sally Koski, Peggy Stolley, Sue Peterson

**BOARD MEETINGS** are held the fourth Monday of the month.

## Upcoming Events



For every \$1 white men earn:  
**White Women** earn 73 cents  
**Black Women** earn 58 cents  
**Native Women** earn 50 cents  
**Latina Women** earn 49 cents



hosts

## UNHAPPY HOUR 2022

Northern Grounds

September 20 4:30 - 6:00 PM

32% DISCOUNT ON BEVERAGES  
reflecting MN 8th District gender pay gap

## Public Policy - 2022 Equal Pay Days

The Ely Branch of AAUW will host a BIPOC 'Unhappy Hour' on **September 20th** at Northern Grounds. Historically, Equal Pay Day has been calculated using data on full-time, year-round workers. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed many women, especially women of color, into part-time or seasonal work, or out of the workforce all together. For 2022, the Equal Pay Day coalition adopted a new, more inclusive methodology to determine the date each year that signifies how far into the year women need to work to attain the income that white men made at the end of the previous year.

- May 3: Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Women's Equal Pay Day. (paid 75 cents on the dollar to white men).
- September 21: Black Women's Equal Pay Day. (paid 58 on the dollar to white men).
- November 30: Native Women's Equal Pay Day. (paid 50 cents on the dollar to white men).
- December 8: Latina's Equal Pay Day. (paid 49 cents on the dollar to white men).

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated structural economic inequalities that have made it much harder for women of color to weather this storm. Our nation's history has created systems that funnel women—especially women of color—into lower- paying occupations and undervalue the

work that women do. While these inequities have been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, the wage gap is an intentional, structural problem that demands intentional, structural solutions.

*Opportunities for Change- Encouraging our legislatures to pass the following legislation:*

- *Make existing pay equity laws stronger: The Paycheck Fairness Act and the Fair Pay Act.*
- *Raise the minimum wage and eliminate the tipped minimum wage: Raise the Wage Act*
- *Improve paid leave and child care support Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act and The Healthy Families Act. Fund early childhood education programs*
- *Institute robust protections against sexual, racial and other forms of harassment: BE HEARD in the Workplace Act, the EMPOWER Act and the Forced Arbitration Injustice Repeal (FAIR) Act.*
- *Collect relevant data: The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) should reinstate collection of critical wage data ..*

Adapted from [https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2021/07/SimpleTruth\\_4.0-1.pdf](https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2021/07/SimpleTruth_4.0-1.pdf)

## Northland Get Together 2022

Join other Ely branch members who are going to the AAUW Northland Get Together on **Saturday, October 8**, in Baxter, MN. The AAUW Brainerd Branch will host this gathering for the Northeastern Minnesota AAUW branches with the theme Spark: Zisikine: Chispa (flicker, gleam, a small but important amount). The focus is on understanding Indigenous and immigrant women's experiences from both a historical perspective and a personal "her-story." How do we as individuals and an AAUW branch "SPARK" action to use our knowledge to create a better history/"her-story" for future generations?

The program syncs very well with the work that our Ely Branch has been doing through the "Awareness.....Then Change" initiative that promotes understanding and connection with our Indigenous neighbors. There are four powerful speakers attending in the morning, and the afternoon includes networking discussions, a fun Holiday Decorating with Natural Materials session by a University of Minnesota Master Gardener, and branch highlights.

The Brainerd Branch received a Strategic Plan Action grant to host the Northland Get Together 2022 so the reduced registration fee is \$35.00 per person which includes morning refreshments, lunch and the programs. **The registration deadline is September 30.**

The program runs from 9:30 to 2:30 pm and the drive takes approximately 3 ½ hours from Ely. It may be wise to stay overnight in the area on Friday night, October 7, and drive home when the program ends at 2:30 pm. Carpooling is encouraged. There are many accommodation options in the Baxter/Brainerd area. The address of the Northland Arboretum where the event will take place is 14250 Conservation Drive, Baxter, MN. Here is a [link](#) that may help with accommodations.

We will include the Northland Get Together brochure and registration form in the email notice for the September 13 Branch Meeting. If you would like to attend and need a registration form before the email is sent we would be glad to email a form to you if you contact Linda or Andrea at [ldsutton2001@aol.com](mailto:ldsutton2001@aol.com) or [alandropike@gmail.com](mailto:alandropike@gmail.com). Hope you can attend this event!

## Branch Updates

### Spring 2022 Adopt-A-Highway litter pickup

By Jeanne Tomlinson

Thanks once again for a wonderful turnout!! We did our Spring litter pickup along Hwy 169 over three days, Thursday June 2 through Saturday, June 4. Twelve people signed up and a couple of them brought along their spouse. Illness caused a couple cancellations, but we were still able to divide up our two mile stretch into smaller sections which always makes it easier for each worker.

Most teams were done with their assigned section in less than an hour. Several reported that they had fun and felt like it was a great chance to learn more about fellow branch members. MNDOT was notified on Saturday afternoon that we had completed cleaning up our entire section.

Thanks so much to the teams: Barb and Kurt Soderberg, \*Di White, Jeanne Tomlinson, Andrea Pike, Lucy Diesslin, Sue Peterson, Pam Ransom, Valerie and Frank Myntti. Well done, all!!

\*New member



## NCCWSL report

Courtney Schurhammer reports on her NCCWSL experience!

I attended NCCWSL this year and had an absolute blast! My favorite workshop was “Women and Confidence” presented by Kimberly Dickman. She discussed how important it is for women to be confident in their careers and not be afraid to show it outwardly. She taught us to stop apologizing so much, be assertive, be less of a perfectionist, and to accept failure as a learning experience.

Even with the conference being virtual, the chat section was booming with women discussing the topics and connecting through LinkedIn. I made so many connections with like-minded women across the country. I also filled many pages of my notebook with helpful tips and tricks from the speakers. It was a great experience with lots of helpful information. Thank you so much to AAUW for sponsoring my attendance!”

Jessica Anderson also attended NCCWSL and will share her experience with us next month!

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## Fundraising



**PIGGY BANKS WILL BE EMPTIED IN OCTOBER!**

AAUW gives each member a piggy bank to be decorated as you wish! We save our change and THEN empty them together, praise your clever design, and award a few prizes! Then you can trade them or take back your own design to fill again! There will be lots of chances during the year to show off your creation and help raise money for our scholarships!

**Other fundraising--let Kay know if you would like to host:**

- A wine and appetizer pop up
- A cooking or craft class of some kind
- Organize a movie night

## Membership

Please let Kay know at 218-235-6102 or [khv771@gmail.com](mailto:khv771@gmail.com) if you know of someone interested in joining AAUW!

## Let's Talk About: Paid Parental Leave by Anna Heil

The United States is the only wealthy country in the world without any mandated paid parental leave at the national level—despite the increase in female employment rates and a decline in the male breadwinner family model. Mothers in the work force have increased over the past half-century from 51% to 72% and fatherhood has grown to encompass more child care responsibilities. Despite this, data from the World Policy Analysis Center (January 2020) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (April 2018) show that only a handful of other countries, mostly low or middle income (such as New Guinea, Suriname, and a few South Pacific island nations) offer no guaranteed paid parental leave. The only other country out of the 193 in the United Nations to not have paid leave laws for new parents is the United States. By comparison, Britain offers 39 weeks of paid parental leave, Sweden offers 68 weeks, Estonia 82 weeks or more, and Japan 52 weeks or more. While ten states (and Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia) mandate some degree of paid parental leave, federal law only guarantees new parents unpaid time off, and not all workers qualify—Minnesota is not among the states requiring paid family and medical leave laws beyond the basic federal laws.

It seems like common sense these days that families rely on income from two parents—in 2015



almost half of two parent families included two full-time working parents, which doesn't even include single parent families and parents with part-time jobs. The need for paid parental leave, both socially and economically, is there: paid parental leave enables parents to take time off while ensuring some job and income protection, and there's evidence that paid parental leave increases women's participation in the workforce and reduces gender pay gaps. The policies that exist in other countries recognize the work and economic contribution that parents make by caring for their children, as well as the time it takes to recover physically and emotionally after giving birth. Some studies even show that paid parental leave policies have an impact on infant and maternal health.

So, what does the federal and Minnesota state legislative future look like for paid parental leave in the U.S. today? President Biden's "Build Back Better Plan" originally included proposals to fund social policy initiatives, including paid family leave, but the proposed legislative framework was divided and reworked by the evenly divided Senate. The landmark Inflation Reduction Act, passed by Congress and signed into law mid-August 2022, excluded many of the original social safety net proposals. Although the Inflation Reduction Act incorporates some impressive infrastructure relating to climate change, healthcare, and tax reform proposals, leave for new parents was ultimately left on the cutting room floor. The federal future of paid paternal leave remains insecure under the current politically divided government, and imminent opportunities for bipartisan support seem grim. There are currently no statewide laws in Minnesota mandating paid parental leave, although eligible state employees are provided up to six consecutive weeks of paid parental leave and any Minnesotan residents can utilize the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, which provides twelve work weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave. As of August 26, 2022, it is the policy of the City of Minneapolis to provide eligible employees with up to twelve weeks of paid parental leave. All other parental leave is dictated individually by private companies, with no state standards in place.

## New Member!

### Meet Jill Nocera Swanson!

Hello! My name is Jill Nocera Swanson and I have lived in Ely for 13 years. I am originally from Bristol, Connecticut. I attended the University of Vermont and received a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Science Education with a 7-12th grade teaching license and a concentration in Geology. I ended up following my true passion of outdoor, environmental education and worked at an outdoor residential school in Sonora, California shortly after graduating. I went on to teach English as a Foreign Language in both Barcelona, Spain and Naples Italy. I spent about four and a half years living and teaching in Naples while spending weekends and holidays with my relatives in the gorgeous mountainside town of Agerola.

I decided to go back to school when I turned 30 and received a Masters of Education in Environmental Education at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. My husband Scott works as a Forest Technician for the Forest Service here in Ely. I work as a Youth Program Coordinator for

**Ely Community Resource.** I love being outside and staying active. I enjoy running, swimming, skiing, canoeing, gardening, cooking and spending time with family and friends. Scott and I have two amazing, strong willed little girls Kaija (9) and Mila (7), therefore I am thrilled to now be a member of AAUW!



## New Member!

### Meet Emmy Ferguson!

Emmy is originally from Minnetonka, Minnesota, but has been living in Ely for the past 7 years working for the Voyageur Outward Bound School. She has enjoyed calling the Boundary Waters home, and getting to cultivate her love for canoeing, backpacking, dogsledding and cross-country skiing. Emmy enjoys traveling, making kombucha, and spending time with helping her recently retired sled dog Blade learn how to settle into life as a pampered pet and skijor buddy.

This past year Emmy decided it was time to take a step away from the seasonal lifestyle of Outward Bound and has recently enrolled in an online Social Work graduate program through Case Western University. She is planning on continuing her education here in Ely and finding a field placement to get more involved in the local community. She hopes to become a therapist and is looking forward to learning more tools to help people improve their relationships and their wellbeing.

