



Northwoods News - February 2023

MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS ANDREA AND LINDA

As 2023 gets underway, so does the new legislative session down at the Minnesota State Capitol. Adding the Equal Rights Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution looks particularly encouraging this year with Democrats holding majorities in the House and Senate along with a governor in favor of this amendment. We have been working towards ERA passage on the state and federal level for YEARS. But even if the ERA bill passes Minnesota legislative bodies this session, it MUST be approved by a majority of Minnesotans who vote in the general election in November 2024 for the ERA to be added as an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution.

Minnesota State Equal Rights Amendment bill (SF 37, HF 173):

“Equality under the law shall not be abridged or denied by this state or any of its cities, counties, or other political subdivisions on account of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, ancestry, or national origin.”

The wording of the proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution is even simpler: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” This amendment was first introduced to Congress in 1923 – over one hundred years ago!

Getting the Minnesota bill passed will take work on our part. Our branch is ramping up efforts to get the Minnesota House and Senate to pass the Equal Rights Amendment to the Minnesota State Constitution. Printing ERA postcards to send to our state and federal district House and Senate representatives, calling our state and federal representatives prior to floor votes, sponsoring a Tuesday Group presentation on ERA, and letters to the editor of local newspapers are all actions in the planning stage by our branch.

Having conversations with our fellow Minnesotans about the importance of getting the ERA passed will be key. Eighty percent of people in America think that we have the ERA in the U.S. Constitution and that sex equality is guaranteed to all. It isn't, and we need to let others know. According to a survey in 2016 by the ERA Coalition, approximately 94 percent of people in the United States would support an amendment protecting gender equality in the Constitution.

Why must the ERA pass? There are too many reasons to list here, but one reason is while the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment has been interpreted to protect against discrimination on the basis of sex, that understanding of the Amendment is not assured or guaranteed. The 14th Amendment was passed in 1868, but it was not until the 1970s (over one hundred years later) that the U.S. Supreme Court began to apply the Equal Protection Clause to cases of sex discrimination. However, the Court has declined to elevate sex discrimination claims to the strict scrutiny standard of review that the 14th Amendment requires for the classifications of race, religion, and national origin. For example, with its 1976 ruling in *Craig v. Boren*, the Court found that men and women could be treated differently under the law if such treatment served an "important governmental objective" without being in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. What??

And laws like Title IX and the Equal Pay Act are not permanent protections for women; they can be rescinded or replaced at any time.

Bottom line, we need to work to ensure that Minnesota's ERA bill is passed this year then begin education with the public on why they need to vote "YES" on the ballot in November 2024. Work on ERA passage on the federal level is also planned.

Do you want to serve on our AAUW Ely board? We have fun while also getting things done. The following positions are open for the 2022-2024 term:

Secretary

VP of Program (one of the three VP of Program positions is open)

Contact us if you are interested or would like more information on the positions!

Join us at the next branch meeting on February 14 when Certified Happiness Coach Autumn Cole will discuss the Keys to Happiness. Hope to see you there!

Linda and Andrea

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

BRANCH MEETINGS for 2023 are as follows:

February 14th – Keys to Happiness
- Autumn Cole

March 14th – Planned Parenthood
- Peggy Stolley and 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

If you need a ride to a meeting or event, please be sure to contact Linda Sutton or Linda Bergum!

BOARD MEETINGS are held the fourth Monday of the month.

PUBLIC POLICY

AAUW Ely, Public Policy Committee

By Pam Ransom

The AAUW Public Policy Committee, during its first meeting of the year, began discussion / planning for activities for 2023. Many thanks to Committee members for contributing your talents and creative ideas during our monthly planning meetings. The following are projects / programs that are “in the works”. .. “Awareness.... Then Change” – We will continue to create awareness and take action on key local and national public policy issues...working towards positive social change. During 2023, we will be working in the following key areas:

ERA Minnesota - We’re taking the following actions to develop knowledge / support for passage of the ERA in Minnesota:

Promote an ERA Presentation at Tuesday Group

Send ERA postcards to Minnesota legislators

Set up a meeting of constituents with Rep. Skraba concerning passage of the ERA in Minnesota

Here is an interesting resource from AAUW concerning our working on passage of issues such as the ERA:

[Political vs. Partisan: A Guide to Your AAUW Advocacy Actions: AAUW](#)

Land Acknowledgement (of our being on Indigenous People’s Land) – Prior to our AAUW Branch meetings, a member will read our “Land Acknowledgement” statement acknowledging and respecting that, our meeting, is being held upon Indigenous People’s Land.

START SMART - START SMART is an online, facilitator guided AAUW workshop, “designed to empower women with the skills and confidence by learning strategies to successfully negotiate e.g. salary & benefits in the workplace.” We are presently learning more about the workshops in order to decide if we want to proceed further with offering these training sessions in the Ely area.

Human Trafficking – We have begun talking about this issue and what actions AAUW Ely could take to address this problem. Initial ideas included: putting up signage in women’s public bathrooms in restaurants, bars; bring a speaker to discuss this issue at an AAUW Ely Monthly meeting and possibly at a “Tuesday Group” meeting.

“End of the Road Film Festival” – On “Indigenous Student Day” Friday, Feb 10th , AAUW Ely will sponsor lunch at the Ely Folk School for students who have been invited to the “End of the Road Film Festival” from Nett Lake, Fond du Lac, VCC and several Duluth schools.

Jessica Anderson

Pam Ransom

Mary Setterholm

Public Policy Chairs

LET'S TALK ABOUT: 2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

By Anna Heil

With January coming to a close, Minnesota can properly celebrate a month of its most diverse legislative body yet. With the DFL taking wins in both the Senate and the House in the midterm elections, Minnesota's state government now includes 35 lawmakers of color (including the first 3 black women ever to represent at the state level and the first Japanese American elected to the Legislature) and 12 lawmakers that represent the LGBTQ+ community (including the first transgender person ever elected to the state). With this new wave of diverse lawmakers and a state government that is ready to prioritize progressive politics, let's review what the Minnesota Legislature has been able to accomplish in January and what concerns it is expected to emphasize moving forward.

Lawmakers are juggling a lot of priorities early in the legislative session. DFL leaders have highlighted protecting LGBTQ+ rights, addressing climate change, legalizing marijuana, safeguarding abortion access, strengthening immigration rights, advancing paid family and medical leave, investing in public education and safety, and providing tax cuts as areas that they are ready to focus on. What a broad range of issues! So far in January, a House committee has passed a bill banning conversion therapy—the outdated medical practice of “correcting” gay children's sexual orientation—which will move on to the state House Health and Finance Committee, where it is expected to pass. Senators have taken testimony on a bill that would legalize recreational marijuana if it becomes law. The Senate also passed the CROWN act—an update to the Minnesota Human Rights Act that would include hair discrimination as racial discrimination (important for black women in particular who are punished at workplaces and schools for wearing their natural hair)--and a bill that would recognize Juneteenth as a state holiday. The House has passed a bill requiring Minnesota's electricity to become carbon-free by 2040, a landmark proposal to address climate change that has a companion entering the Senate in the near future. The Minnesota Senate and House united in passing an abortion rights bill, the “PRO act”, which now heads to the governor's desk for signature. The bill gives Minnesotans the “fundamental right” to abortion and reproductive care like fertility treatment and contraceptives. Obviously this is just a small sample of what legislation looks like in Minnesota after the first month of the year, but it's clear the DFL controlled state government intends to continue pushing hard to pass bills that serve their primary issues.

What does this mean for us as members of AAUW? The bottom line is there is a lot of legislation at this moment that impacts women and girls, both directly and indirectly. AAUW's goal is to obtain gender equity, and the exciting (and daunting!) part of that mission is that it can be applied to almost infinite dimensions of our state politics. What are YOU passionate about? What legislation do YOU want to see addressed by our state government this term? And how do the answers to those questions relate to the advancement of women and girls? The more we know about what is happening in our government, and what the goals of its current leaders are, the more empowered we can be in supporting change that impacts and inspires us.

FUNDRAISING



Keep filling those piggy banks! Spring is coming!

MEMBERSHIP

If you are talking to someone who wants to join AAUW and you don't have a membership form, tell them to Google – AAUW Ely MN, then click on the site.

On our webpage, they can click on the membership form. They can print it out and mail it in with a check.

Kay can be reached at 218-235-6102 or khv771@gmail.com.

MEMBER UPDATES

Meet Deb Busch!

I was lucky to spend my high school years in Heidelberg, Germany, as an “Army Brat” and my family traveled throughout Europe during our years there. I spent two years at UW, then returned to Heidelberg, where I met my future husband, who was on active duty, and we moved to Minnesota, where we raised two fierce and beautiful daughters in Apple Valley. I continued college at Metro State and worked full time.

I retired after 33 years in the Federal Government as an HR manager. Most of my career was as an Employee Benefits Specialist, and I enjoyed explaining retirement and benefit programs to employees the U. S. Department of Agriculture throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

After retirement, I loved training our new pup in obedience, agility courses, and as a certified therapy dog. We spent many years going to schools and libraries where children were pretty excited to read books to the therapy dogs.

In the summer of 2021, we bought a house just east of Ely, and I will never get tired of seeing the deer. I'm enjoying the small town feel of Ely, the friendly residents, and I look forward to getting to know more members of AAUW.



Meet Heide Buettner!

My name is Heide Hildegard Buettner (nee Eickhoff). I was born in 1944 in Bonn, West Germany. My parents were in the medical field. My dad finished med school and was drafted into the war. Our house was bombed out and we moved to my father's relatives, where I grew up until I was 8 years old. My parents had gotten divorced when I was 3 years old. My mom remarried when I was 9 and we moved to Remscheid (about 35 miles northeast of Cologne) where I went to grade school and high school. After graduating, I pursued a career as a "doctor's" helper. I worked in my stepdad's office and went to a votech school, a 2-year program. After graduating from there, I moved to Bonn and studied at the University there to become a Medical Technologist. My first job after graduation was in a virology lab. After 2 years (still in the University system), I asked for a transfer to the Institute of Forensic Medicine. I worked in the alcohol lab for 1 year until the Med Tech in the histology lab got married and went to America for a 1 year fellowship! I am always wondering whether they are also still here in this country.

I met my husband, Helmut, at the Institute. He was finishing up an internship of 3 months with us. He joined in September. We started dating in November, got engaged in February, married in May and came to the States in July, to Miami, Florida. Helmut had a 1-year fellowship at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Ophthalmology. After 2 years of fellowships, 3 years residency, 1 year retina fellowship, he was recruited to Mayo Clinic in Rochester in 1975. Our 2 children, Dirk and Kerstin, were both born in Miami, Florida. We made some very nice friends who introduced me to volunteer work. I haven't stopped since, having been fortunate enough not to have to work outside my home to feed our family.

I think we built our home on Garden Lake 23 years ago as our retirement place. But medical problems prevented us from doing just that. My husband, Helmut, passed away 3 years ago and I am spending as much time up here as I can.

Thank you all for embracing me with your love and companionship.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Ely Branch of AAUW respectfully acknowledges that we are on the homelands of the Lake Superior Bands of Ojibwe people and within the ceded lands of the Treaty of 1854, where they retained rights to hunt, fish, and gather.

We also recognize other Indigenous peoples who lived here before the Ojibwe people. These include Dakota, Cree, and other tribes that have occupied and utilized this land.

We recognize the perseverance and survival of our Indigenous neighbors who continue to live throughout this region. We're deeply grateful for the multitude of ways that the Anishinaabeg have and continue to contribute to collective well-being through sharing of knowledge and time.