

## Northwoods News - January 2024



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

Greetings, AAUW Ely Branch Members!

We hope everyone had a joyful and peaceful holiday with family, friends, food and fun. It's hard to reconcile December holiday season with the rainy and sloppy weather we're having, but we look forward to an exciting new year for our branch.

If you were unable to join us at our December holiday celebration, be assured that you were missed! It was a wonderful celebration of the past year, and we enjoyed the company of friends, old and new. Heide Buettner read the Tom Hegg story, "A Cup of Christmas Tea," and it was a lovely reminder of the reason we celebrate the season. We think this could become a December tradition as we go forward. Thanks so much, Heide, you are greatly appreciated. While we ate dinner, we played a fun trivia game at our tables that Mary Setterholm provided. Finally, we got to bidding in earnest on the silent auction and purchasing raffle tickets until the prizes were awarded and the auction items distributed. Thanks, as always, Kay Vandervort, for your superb management of our fundraising activities. We were able to raise over \$1,000 for our upcoming branch activities and scholarships.

Now we look to 2024 and it will be a busy year for us. In addition to our normal activities, we will be actively participating in the effort to push the State Legislature to put an

amendment on the ballot to the voters of Minnesota to change the State Constitution to guarantee equal rights to all, regardless of gender. There will be much more to come about how members can help finally make the Equal Rights Amendment a reality.

Another upcoming event in 2024 is the Northland Get Together that the Ely branch is hosting on Saturday, October 12 at the GEL. Members from all the Northeastern Minnesota AAUW branches will come to Ely to participate in a one-day event. The Get Together will require a great deal of member participation to make this event a success. A committee has met to determine the logistical details, and starting right away in January the team will meet regularly to plan the theme, program, speakers and community partners that will make the day an enjoyable, entertaining and educational experience for all. If you are interested in being part of the committee, please let Andrea or Linda know. Kristen Switajewski has agreed to co-chair the committee, but we need a willing partner to co-chair with her. Kristen has vast experience planning events in Ely including the Blueberry Festival, but she will need lots of help to make this a success. If you're willing to co chair, let Andrea, Linda or Kristen know.

Our next branch meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 9 at the GEL, as usual. Our speaker will be Lisa Pugh, who will talk to us about her nearly 4,000 mile canoe trip from the headwaters of the Missouri River to the Gulf of Mexico in 2016. Her story of the "Source of Confidence" venture on the 4th longest river system in the world is inspirational. Lisa is also the daughter of our member, Deb Busch. We hope to see many of you at the meeting in person, but there will be a Zoom option as well.

Finally, we extend a huge thank you to all of you for making our branch so extraordinarily vibrant. Every single one of our members brings unique gifts and talents to the group and we're a Branch that works so well as a whole because of the efforts of each. Thanks so much for all you've done in 2023 and now, onward to an amazing 2024!

**Andrea and Linda**

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

January 9, 5:30 pm, GEL: Branch meeting

- Lisa Pugh will discuss her nearly 4,000 mile canoe trip from the headwaters of the Missouri River down the Mississippi to the Gulf.

February 13, 5:30 pm, GEL: Branch meeting

- Beth Peterson, Minnesota Senior State Director with Vote Run Lead, will discuss the political power of women as voters, candidates, and leaders to create and sustain an equitable democracy.

March 12, 5:30 pm, GEL: Branch meeting

- Kelly Klun, Klun Law Firm (and AAUW branch member!) will discuss estate planning.

April 9, 5:30 pm, GEL: Branch meeting

- Annual meeting

May 14, 5:30 pm, GEL: Branch meeting

- End of the year banquet and silent auction

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.

## ERAMN RALLY

By Mary Setterholm



Monday, February 12, 2024 - 10:00am to 12:00pm

On the first day of the next legislative session, ERA MN, AAUW MN, and League of Women Voters MN will rally at the Minnesota Capitol encouraging the MN House to pass HF 173 (SF 37 passed the MN senate last session). Once the bill successfully passes both chambers of the legislature, it's up to the general population of Minnesota to ratify the amendment. Once passed by both chambers, there is still a question whether this amendment will be on the ballot in 2024 or 2026. Is there enough time to educate Minnesota voters about the amendment and why it is needed? Are there more pressing amendments related to reproductive care that would increase voter turnout in 2024? There will be much more discussion before a decision is made, but wouldn't it be great if after nearly 100 years trying to get this amendment passed, we have the ability to get it on an upcoming ballot!

Our Ely branch would like to provide a strong showing at this rally. We will leave Sunday afternoon February 11th , planning to arrive in St. Paul for dinner and evening entertainment. We will attend the rally at the capitol from 10 to 12, eat lunch and head back to Ely. Car pools will be arranged. Please consider joining us as we get in a last push to get this amendment on the ballot! If interested in attending contact Linda (ldsutton2001@aol.com), Andrea (alandropike@gmail.com), or Mary (mary.setterholm@gmail.com), or anyone on the Public Policy committee, and we will make sure to get car pools and hotel rooms set up!

## **END OF THE ROAD FILM FESTIVAL STUDENT DAY LUNCH**

**By Mary Setterholm**



## **END OF THE ROAD FILM FESTIVAL STUDENT DAY LUNCH**

**Friday, February 9, 11:30 am until 1 pm**

An effort to support our students in learning indigenous stories through film, food, and community! We want to inspire our students to make their own art and tell their own stories!

Last year, AAUW Ely Public Policy committee provided lunch to students and educators on Student Day during the initial End of the Road Film Festival. It was such an invigorating event-to watch the films with all those bright faces and then share lunch with them!

We have been asked to support the effort again this year. This year, students will come from additional schools including North Hennepin Tech and MN North Vermilion campuses. Are you willing to be a volunteer at this event? Contact Mary Setterholm ([mary.setterholm@gmail.com](mailto:mary.setterholm@gmail.com)) or Linda Sutton ([ldsutton2001@aol.com](mailto:ldsutton2001@aol.com)) to learn more!

## **PUBLIC POLICY**

**AAUW Ely, Public Policy Committee**

by Mary Setterholm

## **NEXT Public Policy Meeting: January 16, 4:30 at the Boathouse**

The Historic Ely State Theater is currently showing the film *Killers of the Flower Moon*, a true story of a series of murders of the Osage Native Americans. This is a piece of history never taught when in school. Minnesota wants to improve Native American History Education. In 2023, we saw changes in teacher education requirements and education funding stipulated for teaching Native American History. Once these were in place, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community developed a grant program to assist educators in meeting these requirements.

The Minnesota State Legislature passed a new law requiring a basic amount of training on Native American history and culture and currently is designed to make sure teachers understand both the history of Minnesota Tribal Nations and the issues facing them. In addition to this, Minnesota governor Tim Walz stipulated a part of his education budget to be given so teachers have the resources to study and teach Native American history. “Given the rich history of American Indians and their contemporary contributions, more time and resources should be provided to Minnesota educators,” Walz’s budget proposal stated. Understanding that Minnesota’s Indigenous history is complex, rich, and long and far too often ignored in both U.S. and Minnesota history lessons makes this welcome news indeed.

A new grant program that is accepting applications starting December 18 will award mini-grants to support K-12 educators as they teach students about Native American culture, history, and modern tribal governments in schools across Minnesota. Established and funded by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community’s Understand Native Minnesota campaign, this mini-grant program aims to increase awareness of Native history and culture by supporting teachers who are pursuing training or classroom projects to share accurate narratives and build understanding of the contributions and experiences of Native peoples in Minnesota.

The program has \$500,000 available for mini-grants in 2024, with awards of up to \$2,000 per educator. The deadline for applications for the 2024 calendar year is January 22.

“If we are going to dramatically improve the position of Native people and tribal nations in the consciousness of our fellow Minnesotans, it naturally leads us to concentrate most of our efforts on the kids who will be tomorrow’s citizens, workers, voters and leaders,” said Rebecca Crooks Stratton, Secretary/Treasurer of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and chair of the Understand Native Minnesota campaign. “Through

Understand Native Minnesota, our tribe is pleased to commit \$500,000 to this mini-grants program to advance Native American narrative change in Minnesota's public schools."

Mini-grants can be used for classroom resources, materials and projects, professional development, or curriculum and resource development. Educators in Minnesota K-12 public, charter, tribal, and private schools are all eligible to apply for funding.

This mini-grant program aims to:

1. Promote the acquisition and use of Native-specific resources for classrooms and libraries.
2. Develop new standards-aligned curriculum resources.
3. Support educators in attending high-quality, Native-specific professional development.
4. Support experiential learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom.
5. Implement best practices for Native students.



## FUNDRAISING

By Kay Vandervort

### Piggy Banks

Do you have an AAUW ceramic piggy bank? Have you decorated it? Are you filling it with all that random loose change you find at the bottom of your purse and littering your dresser?

More banks have been ordered and will be available any time. Then plan to bring your filled, decorated bank to the annual meeting in April for the emptying and pig parade. But because this is an ongoing fundraiser, we'll send you back home with your empty bank so it can be refilled over the summer.

## **Pie and Mimosa Pop Up!**

On **Saturday, January 13, at 9 am**, please join us for a pie and mimosa popup fundraiser breakfast! Since we may have missed trying all of the holiday pies due to full stomachs, we'll just have some now! The location is Sarah Paro's house, **652 E James Street** in Ely.

Bring your best pie or pie-like item, a bottle of champagne, or just yourself...feel free to bring a spouse, partner, or friend. Since this is a popup fundraiser to benefit our scholarships and causes, please bring a small donation also.

## **MEMBER UPDATES**

### **MEMBER UPDATE!**

We're excited to welcome two new members since the last Northwoods News. Please welcome:

Kristen Switajewski [switk82@gmail.com](mailto:switk82@gmail.com)

Pam Brunfelt [pam.brunfelt.moh@gmail.com](mailto:pam.brunfelt.moh@gmail.com) (A hearty welcome back to Pam, a longtime member and past branch president.)

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### **MEET CAROLINE OWENS!**

I love water, both frozen and liquid, so living in northern Minnesota for the past 20 years has been perfect for me -- maybe not so much for my husband.

I grew up in Minneapolis, close to Lake Harriet, and I spent my summers at Green Lake in central Minnesota. During my college years at Grinnell, I earned a degree in sociology while spending the summers teaching both swimming and canoeing, and life guarding at Girl Scout camps. After graduating in 1962, I married a naval officer. For the next 20 years, we lived a nomadic life, but always stuck close to either the Atlantic or Pacific oceans.

My first career began as a Public Welfare social worker in Norfolk, VA, and ended in Annapolis, MD when I was fired for being pregnant. I spent the remainder of the nomadic phase of my life raising three children and volunteering for non-profit organizations.



We were living in Fairfax, VA when my husband retired from the Navy in 1982. I earned an MBA from George Mason University the same year, with the intention of beginning a career in non-profit management. However, I ended up in a small accounting firm and took enough additional accounting courses to sit for and pass the CPA exam, which marked the beginning of my second career. I worked in public accounting and corporate financial management until retiring in 2002.

Several of Ely's non-profit organizations have granted me the opportunity to expand my accounting knowledge to the non-profit sector as a volunteer. I've also enjoyed many outdoor adventures, including trips into the Boundary Waters with my grandchildren. Living close to Ely on a lake means I can jump in whenever the spirit moves me. Interacting with awesome Ely women is a plus.



## **SAY HELLO TO JESSICA KULIK!**

I grew up in the Chicago suburbs and visited my family in the farmland of Illinois, going to Wisconsin for Carthage College before becoming a teacher. I taught for 10 years in 2 states and in 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades in special education, bilingual education, and general education. Although I loved teaching, I left after the 10th year to become the Digital Communications Specialist at the International Wolf Center when we moved to Ely. During those years of teaching, I got my ELL endorsement, a Master's in Bilingual Education, a special education endorsement, and a Master's in Digital Marketing.

I was diagnosed with Autism a few years ago, which contributed to my decision to leave teaching. I love learning about psychology and helping others who have neurodivergent family members or are newly diagnosed themselves. I specifically focus on practical executive functioning interventions to support success while minimizing stress. I'm rebuilding a coaching business I used to own with a friend who coaches families and individuals on executive functioning supports in their lives. Because of my goal to reopen that business, I recently started a Doctoral Program in Developmental Psychology. I'm only 1 class in, but I'm loving learning about my particular interest again. I'm so happy we moved to Ely, and I decided to be brave and come to the garden party alone. One of my

accommodations is to go places with someone I know typically, which was a big deal and has turned into something I love being part of.

Tim and I visited Illinois for the holidays and are thankful that we moved to Ely and joined the amazing community here. It's been such a positive change in our lives, allowing us to feel like we are truly where we belong.



## MEMBERSHIP

Have a friend who might be interested in joining? Either of the presidents or Kay are happy to follow up with that person.

Membership forms are available at all meetings, or you can schedule a coffee time and invite a member or two to join you and your friend to talk about what we do and why we love AAUW.

## 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.