

Northwoods News - March 2024



MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS ANDREA AND LINDA

Greetings AAUW Ely Branch Members,

Voting is important, right? Our branch members, together with all AAUW members nationwide, will have an exciting opportunity to vote on a bylaw amendment to allow anyone who believes in equity for women and girls to become a member of AAUW whether they have a degree or not. Voting will take place online from April 3 to May 15. This vote needs to pass.

AAUW membership should not be limited to those with a degree. Those without degrees fight for gender equity just as we do. We can be stronger advocates when we are inclusive, not exclusive. Opening up membership to those without a degree will not change who we are and what we are working towards; it will strengthen our efforts by including anyone who is as committed as we are about equity for women and girls.

AAUW was founded in 1881 to encourage more women to pursue higher education and help to open the doors for career advancement. Very few women attended a college or university back then. AAUW evolved and began the fight for pay equity. The focus expanded to include advocating for the needs of people of color and communities in poverty. AAUW earned permanent United Nations observer status in 1946 which led to AAUW members expanding the fight for civil rights. In the 143 years since our founding,

AAUW never stopped advocating for education while expanding our focus to issues impacting women in addition to pay equity – maternity leave, sexual harassment, violence against women, reproductive rights, and so much more.

This bylaw amendment requires a two-thirds majority (66.67%) of those voting to pass. When this amendment was last voted upon in 2021, it just missed passing with 63% voting for the change. Let's get it passed this time!

Voting will be online starting April 3. AAUW uses Simply Voting, an independent voting system. Members will receive emails from vote@simplyvoting.com with their own unique Elector ID and Password to vote. Add vote@simplyvoting.com to your contacts. It is not spam.

This is a bylaw change that needs to happen. Let's change the bylaws to allow anyone who supports AAUW's purpose of advancing equity for women and girls to be a member. Please vote.

Join us for the next branch meeting on March 12 at the Grand Ely Lodge. Our speaker, Kelly Klun from Klun Law Firm (and AAUW member!), will discuss estate planning.

Come early at 5:00 for social time. The program starts at 5:30 followed by our branch meeting. Hope to see you there!

Andrea and Linda

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

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.

ERA MN RALLY

On Monday, February 12, 2024, eight Ely Branch members, along with Jan Carey, AAUW MN State President, attended the opening day of the legislative session. We gathered in the Capitol Rotunda for a high-energy rally from 10 am to noon. The intent was to send a message to all our State Representatives and Senators to pass a bill in both chambers to include the Equal Rights Amendment on the ballot and let the citizens vote for its inclusion in the Minnesota State Constitution.

In our bright green ERA YES t-shirts, we gathered with a large contingent of AAUW members from all around the state and many others advocating for equality for all. The morning began with group chants and singing, bringing high energy and passion to the historic space.

The inspirational speakers included Senator Mary Kunesh and Representative Kaohly Her, (co-sponsors of the bill), Attorney General Keith Ellison, AAUW Vice President Public Policy Chair Kelsey Waits, and many others. It was heartwarming to hear so many diverse voices speaking up for the passage of the amendment. It was clear that those who stand for the ERA also stand for the rights of all marginalized people.

My hope is that the next time we travel to St. Paul for an ERA rally, it will be to celebrate the achievement of the Equal Rights Amendment being added to the State Constitution, making Minnesota the most friendly state in the US for women, girls, and, in fact everyone, to live in.

2024 PROPOSED Robust Language for SF 37:

All persons shall be guaranteed equal rights under the laws of this state. The state shall not discriminate against any person in intent or effect on account of race, color, national origin, ancestry, disability or sex, including but not limited to pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes and reproductive freedom, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation.



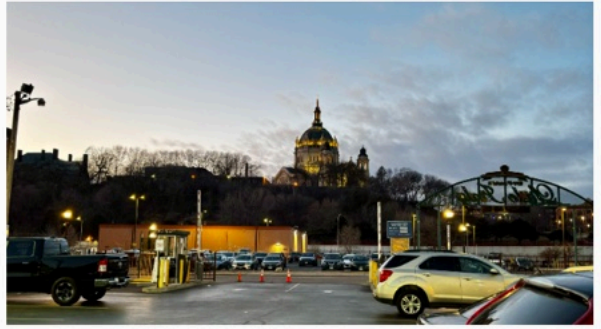
Belly Folliard, Founder of ERA MN, breaks for a photo with the Ely AAUW contingent!







Celeste Hotel which was a former convent built in 1908 – such a fun and beautiful place to stay before the ERA rally!



ELY FILM FEST STUDENT LUNCHEON

AAUW members had fun serving lunch to kids who were attending Indigenous Students Day at the Ely Film Fest. About 80 kids, mostly of Native American heritage, came to the film festival on Friday to view impactful films about Indigenous culture and experiences.

The luncheon, at the Senior Center, was catered by Gators with the cost covered by Ely AAUW and Ely EMPOWER.



*Ely Film Fest
Student Lunch
provided by:*

AAUW - Ely Branch

Ely EMPOWER



PUBLIC POLICY

AAUW Ely, Public Policy Committee
by Mary Setterholm

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

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Polaris received \$1.75 million through competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #102V0134-01-00. The project will be financed with 43.75% of federal funds and 56.25% (\$2.23 million) by non-governmental sources. The contents of this flyer are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

OPERATED BY
Polaris

Public Policy initiative for Quarter 1, 2024

As a follow up to the Tuesday Group presentation AAUW sponsored discussing Human Trafficking, we will be providing the above posters for

area businesses to display in bathrooms. These posters will provide a resource for individuals being trafficked.

Minnesota law requires all lodging employees receive initial and annual training that focuses on the accurate and prompt identification and reporting of, or response to, suspected sex trafficking. In addition to this training, the law requires that each establishment develop a protocol establishing the process for reporting and handling suspected sex trafficking.

Public Policy members met with Chad Houde, Ely Police Chief to explain our project. He was very supportive. Members of the Public Policy committee will meet with the Chamber of Commerce to make them aware of our activity and encourage them to let their membership know posters are available.

Public Policy teams of two will contact bars, restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and Minnesota North Vermillion campus and encourage display of the poster in their bathrooms.

For more information about what you can do to reduce human trafficking in our community, visit [Help Fight Trafficking](#).

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.

MEMBER UPDATES

MEMBER UPDATE!

Sarah Paro has a new email address to use when sending newsletter articles. Thank you! smparo001@gmail.com

MEET CARLY WOGEN!

I grew up in the St. Cloud area, and during high school I was very involved in theater and the captain of the tennis team. Upon graduating, I wanted to get outside of Minnesota which sent me to Fordham University in the Bronx, for two years, before transferring back to the College of St Benedict for my final two years. I completed a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in Spanish.

After graduating, I moved to Minneapolis with some friends and started trying to figure out what to do with my psychology degree, at the height of the recession no less. Eventually I decided to get my masters degree in Psychological Research Methods, from the University of Leicester in middle England. I enjoyed traveling around Europe alone and with friends.

I moved back to Minneapolis after my degree, and eventually found a job in market research. If you are curious about large food companies and their food research, I'm your gal!

I bought a house in Minneapolis and eventually adopted a dog in 2017, named Mabel. In 2019, I met my partner James, and together we decided during the pandemic to move our household up to Ely. We added another dog to the family right before we moved (my terrible idea) but we love her dearly as well.

I currently work at the college bookstore as the manager, and I am on the boards of the NLAA and the Ely Art Walk. I also am very involved in backstage theater activities once again, which is so fun.

For fun, James and I like to camp on occasion and take our dogs for walks on local trails. I also dabble in furniture refinishing and other crafting as the mood strikes. I love joining this small town community and haven't looked back since leaving Minneapolis (except to visit family and friends, of course.)





INTRODUCING KRISTIN SWITAJEWSKI!

My name is Kristen Switajewski, I was born here in Ely, and in 1991, my mom and I moved to the Superior area. We moved around Northern Wisconsin for most of my life. Ten years ago, my family moved back here to Babbitt. This has always been where my heart has called home.

I have gone to school for Early Childhood Education, Veterinary Technician, and Accounting. I have my PCA certification, CAN license, and my Mental Health Practitioner license. When COVID came into our world, I took a step away from the health field and went to work in Hospitality. In 2022, I started to work at the Ely Chamber of Commerce. I am currently the Office Manager, Membership Specialist, Event Coordinator, and Assistant to the Executive Director, along with many more hats I wear there.

I have two wonderful children. Ashton, who is 18 and going to be graduating high school this year, works at the Babbitt Zups and is planning to go into the Armed Forces. He is not sure what branch yet. Coral, who is 17, has been home-schooled for the last 4 years and has decided to return to school this fall in Ely. She is my big-hearted girl. I have 4 4-legged children also. Bandit & Smokey are our Chihuahuas, Peach is our hamster, and ZeZe is the Leopard Gecko.

Twelve years ago, I met my wonderful husband, Joe. My grandpa would tell me that the person you are meant to be with has come into your life before, but you don't know it. Well, that would be Joe. He has crossed my path many times before. He was raised here in Babbitt his whole life and moved away for college. He found a job in Wisconsin, and

that is where I met him. He has worked as a cook at the Babbitt Carefree since we moved here, along with many other part-time summer cooking jobs. We moved to Babbitt because his family is here, and Ely/Babbitt has always been special to me.

In my free time, I'm part of a wonderful organization called Global United Pageant. We are a group of women who want to bring awareness to Childhood Cancer. We have found that more people will stop and talk and listen to you if you have a crown on your head. (Trust me, it does work). Our judges look at what you do for your community and how you help others. Plus, who does not want to dress up and be a Princess? I have been part of the group for over three years. I helped organize our Midwest pageant and our International one.

Seven years ago, Joe and I started our summer business called S & R Breads, where we make homemade breads and sweets. We sell them at the Ely Farmers Market. All the baking is done right out of our home. He has turned half of our basement into a bakery. We start prepping on Friday night, and the first item goes into the oven Sunday night, and the last comes out Tuesday morning before we head to the market.



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.