

Northwoods News - April 2024



MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS ANDREA AND LINDA

Happy Whatever-Season-it-is today, Ely Branch friends!

My goodness, our 2023-2024 Branch meeting season is drawing to a close--just two more meetings--our Tuesday, April 9 Annual Meeting and our May Banquet and Silent Auction event on May 14.

It's been an exciting and fun-filled year. It's also been a year of growth in membership for our branch once again, and we're so grateful for the enthusiastic participation in our regular meetings and fundraising activities, including our popups. We've experienced a 40% growth in the past two years! We believe that our mission-based programs, the work that the Public Policy Committee does in the community, and certainly our annual Garden Party, bring us the exposure that make women want to be a part of such an important endeavor. We are an awesome group of Ely women!

The Scholarship and STEM Committees have been busy over the past couple of months providing opportunities for young women in the community. Three fifth-grade girls will attend STARBASE Camp in Duluth in June, along with two moms as chaperones, sponsored by the Ely Branch and Ely Community Resource. These lucky girls will get hands on experience with rocket engineering, CAD design, GPS navigation, rover programming, earth science investigation and exploration during their four-day experience, while staying at the Edgewater Hotel and Waterpark in Duluth.

Our branch has also selected two Ely Memorial Junior girls to return to the Northwoods Writing Camp on Atsokan Island on Rainy Lake in June. Both girls have attended before, and in returning, they will not only continue to improve their own writing, but learn other

facets of the process, including the art of critiquing while sharing ideas with others.

We've also selected Hailey Buckentin, a Fisheries and Wildlife Management student from Minnesota North College – Vermilion Campus, to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) at the end of May. She is excited and grateful to AAUW for granting her this opportunity. We will invite her to attend our May meeting and banquet, so everyone can meet her.

We had an opportunity on March 26 to speak at a National webinar about member recruitment and retention. It was an honor to have the opportunity to share our use of mission-based activities, specifically our 2018-2020 "Make Ely a 100% Equal Pay Community" and the "Dolly Parton Unhappy Hour Pub Crawl" to attract women to our branch in our small community.

Finally, we want to express our gratitude for all that you ALL do to make our branch a pretty special organization. It's a pleasure to spend time together doing good advocacy work, supporting the AAUW mission of equality for all women and girls, and having a whole lot of fun as we work together. Hope to see you all on April 9!

Linda and Andrea

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

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.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH - RECOGNIZING BARB SODERBERG!

Ely Tourism recently did an article recognizing our member Barb Soderberg during Women's History Month. Below is some of her history. She's been a remarkable role model who has paved the way for women in the Forest Service!

Barb began working for the Forest Service during the summers while attending college starting in 1968. First as a BWCAW permit issuer at the Voyageur Visitor Center (now the Wolf Center) in Ely and then as a Wilderness Ranger. After college, she was offered a job as an engineering technician out of the Superior National Forest's Supervisors Office in Duluth. From there, she had a variety of different jobs with the Forest Service (primarily in recreation and wilderness), retiring in 2007 as the Forest's Public Service Team Leader with overall responsibility for managing the recreation, wilderness, trails, land purchase and exchange, special uses, heritage resources, and public information programs.

What initially drew you to a career in the Forest Service?

I loved the outdoors. Growing up I spent a lot of time with my dad (who was a Minnesota DNR District Ranger) along with my mom (who was also a great role model) ...camping, canoeing, hunting, fishing, cross country skiing...anything that would take us outside. I also had a great appreciation for wild areas.

My introduction to the Forest Service was working summers while in college, first at what was then known as the Voyageur Visitor Center (now the Wolf Center) in Ely issuing BWCAW permits and providing user education and then as a Wilderness Ranger in the BWCAW (which could only happen as part of a married couple - these field going positions weren't open to single women).

What were some of the biggest challenges you faced as a female firefighter or Forest Service employee in the early days of your career? How did you overcome these challenges?

Keep in mind that I started working for the Forest Service 50 years ago. At that time, it was a very male dominated organization based on the military model. The biggest challenge was convincing others of my capabilities and then constantly feeling like I had

to prove myself. Men were much more comfortable relating to women as mothers, sisters, wives or daughters - not as a co-worker. Many felt a woman's place was in the home, not in the workplace. Those traditions along with workforce crew structure supported and perpetuated a male only field crew.

On a more specific note, there was no field clothing (general or specific firefighting) for women (skirts and blouses only) so clothing (including safety equipment like gloves) was based on men's styles and sizing. There was a lack of facilities or perceived lack of facilities (unisex had yet to be invented). Sometimes it was overcoming just being left out...men making decisions for women ("I didn't think you could or wanted to") or withholding information.

Finally, a lack of work flexibility. I couldn't miss a meeting, postpone a deadline, or take time off for an important family event if it conflicted with work because I didn't want anyone to say "That's why we shouldn't hire women."

What advice would you give young women interested in pursuing a career in the Forest Service?

Go for it! There are such a variety of positions available. I can't think of a more flexible, interesting, exciting and rewarding career if they have an interest in caring for the land and serving people! I can honestly say that overall I loved my career....working in a place that I cherished and working with great people (inside and outside of the Agency). I was able to see the Forest Service in action at all levels - from the field where I worked as a wilderness ranger and wild land firefighter to the Washington Office where I had a number of opportunities to testify before Congress. I was able to travel and see many other National Forests and Wilderness Areas, meet interesting people and grow personally and professionally. There were very few days (especially later on in my career) that I wasn't anxious and excited to go to work. How fortunate to get paid for what I have a passion for!

On a more specific note, I would tell them to to be flexible when looking for a job - both in location and position. Both can be changed once in the organization. They should build their resume with both paid and volunteer positions - not just in areas related to their field, but anything that helps a prospective employer know who they are and what they can do. Build up their writing skills, it's a skill that is invaluable and will serve them forever. - sometimes in unexpected ways. If they are interested in an outdoor field, learn what they can about equipment and motors. Network, network, network!

For those in already in the organization and looking for advancement, I would tell them to learn to pick your battles - keep your eye on the big picture. You don't want to end up

winning battles, but losing the war. Base your discussions on issues, don't personalize things. Try to find win/win solutions or compromises to problems when laws, management plans, regulations, etc. allow. Be a team player. Find a mentor that's been around for a while and is well respected. Keep a sense of humor.

Looking back on your career, what are you most proud of?

Being part of managing the Superior National Forest for future generations and being sought after nationally and internationally for advice on wilderness management. On a more personal note, being the first female in a number of positions. It was extremely gratifying to break some barriers and open the way for other women. But when I made these strides it wasn't to be the first woman or to break barriers, it was simply to find a way to get a position that I really wanted and was qualified for.

What is the most memorable wildfire you've ever helped fight (or experienced with the FS), and why?

Being sent as a firefighter to the Roy Lake fire at the end of the Gunflint Trail in 1976. After being turned down for fire details a number of times because I was female, though I passed every test to qualify, I finally convinced management to send me. They stipulated that I could only spend 4 days there. When I arrived at fire camp, they didn't really know what to do with me. I was the first and only female on the fire as a firefighter. To say it was interesting and gratifying is an understatement.

The most memorable adventure came in later years when there were a few more women in the fire organization, I was sent on a three week detail to the Trinity Alps Wilderness in Northern California. Our small crew was dropped off by helicopter on a mountain top early morning with the promise of a pick up by day's end. Because of heavy smoke, we didn't get picked up until three days later.

How has the role of women in the Forest Service changed throughout your career?

The organization has gone through enormous changes in the 50+ years since I began my career through training, personnel policies, organization changes and having a more diverse workforce. It became an employer of choice...more inclusive, supportive, flexible and rewarding.

I have to sincerely thank many men and women who mentored and supported me over the years. They gave me opportunities to grow and shine which helped me advance through the ranks of the Forest Service and retire as the Superior's Public Service Team Leader (responsible for recreation, wilderness, land purchase and exchange, special uses, cultural resources, and public information).



PUBLIC POLICY

AAUW Ely, Public Policy Committee

by Mary Setterholm

It's Your Vote!

The 2024 election will have a major impact on diversity and equity in women's education, economic security, and access to reproductive and civil rights for all women.

The good news? When women vote, we change the conversation. AAUW's "It's My Vote" is a campaign to increase voter participation through education. Research tells us that women don't vote when they lack crucial information on candidates and discussion around policy.

On April 17, from 6-7. Pm, AAUW is providing a webinar to discuss the policy issues at stake in this year's national elections, including pay equity, equity in education, reproductive rights, and the Equal Rights Amendment. Consider registering today: [AAUW 2024 Priorities Registration](#)

Early voting in Minnesota begins September 20th . The Ely branch will again work with ELY Rotary to sponsor candidate forums. With the help of AAUW National, we will make available fact sheets and talking points on issues important to our organization such as access to reproductive healthcare, paid family and sick leave, pay equity, college affordability, and the Equal Rights Amendment.

Joining with other local groups to send postcards encouraging voter turnout and letters to the editor encouraging voter turnout and sharing candidate stances on issues important to our AAUW work can help drive turnout and educate our community.

FUNDRAISING



By Kay Vandervort

LOTS OF FUNDRAISING:

Please bring your piggy banks to empty at the April meeting. If you want, you can bring your change in a separate bag and just bring your empty pig so we can get a picture of our pig parade. Then you'll take your pig back home to refill for the September meeting. But please, if you never have change, don't go get change from the bank. Just bring your pig to show off and call it good. There are other ways you can help the branch. It doesn't have to be with change.

The May banquet will focus on a bucket raffle which is smaller items. For that, we're especially looking for baked items but also just smaller fun stuff such as accessories, cooking, and pampering items with a value between \$10 and \$25. There may be a few silent auction items, but most will be saved for the garden party.

Garden Party: The Garden Party is scheduled for Saturday, July 20 at Barb Soderberg's house. For those of you who have never attended, it includes:

A salad luncheon

Desserts and wine as well as non-alcoholic beverages

A brief program component (which is usually bragging about what we do and giving people a reason to bid higher so we can continue to do those things)

Bucket raffle

Silent auction

Relaxing conversation in a beautiful garden

And whatever great ways we can find to raise money for our mission-based scholarships and programming.

We are looking for auction items such as:

Cocktail pontoon rides or other adventures

A make and deliver dinner for 4 or 6

Teaching a craft or skill for a small group of friends

Certificate for a dessert a month for three to six months

Host a themed dinner for 4 or 6

Art

Quilted items

Baked goods
Pampering packages
Massage certificates
Restaurant gift certificates
Artistic accessories
Pottery
Garden items
Cookbooks and kitchen gadgets
Whatever you think might go well

Any items for either the May banquet or the garden party can be brought to the April meeting or dropped off at Kay's house at 629 E. Boundary Street. at least three weeks before the events---the earlier the better so there's plenty of time to put great packages together. And as always, if you have baskets and containers you no longer need, we can use them for the events.

And we're always looking for Pop Up get together ideas. Let us know what you think would be fun.

MEMBER UPDATES

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

Emily Roose roosie12345@gmail.com

Abby Sirek abigail.sirek12@gmail.com

MEET HOLLY BRODT!

I grew up in Windom, MN. After graduation from High School, I moved to St. Paul, Minnesota to continue my education at Concordia College, St. Paul in Christian Education and later at Century College in White Bear Lake, MN, in Law Enforcement, earning a degree in Criminal Justice in 1986.

I was hired by the St. Paul Police Department and after completing the St. Paul Police Academy in 1888 began an incredible career as a Patrol Officer. My career offered multiple opportunities for additional education and assignments: Certifications as in Critical Incident Debriefing, Critical Incident Response, Post Shooting Debriefing, Health

Realization Instructor (2 yr.), and Death Notifications, and assignments in the Vice Unit, as a Field Training Officer, Director of the Police Chaplaincy, and as an SPPD Police EAP Peer Support Counselor.

In 2006 I earned my degree in Clinical Psychology from Northwestern College to further support my prior certifications in Critical Incident Response.

In 1992 I married my fabulous husband Bruce (SPPD officer for 30 yrs.), which included two amazing stepchildren Jason and Jennifer and eventually grew into adding a daughter-in-law Mary and son-in-law Jared and 3 grandsons (Cooper, Bennett, and Dawson).

When not working we took every opportunity to explore the Superior Hiking Trail, and North Shore State Parks, and relax and unwind at either Bluefin Bay in Tofte or Kawishiwi Lodge in Ely, Minnesota.

After retirement my husband Bruce and I left St. Paul, landing for 3 years in Two Harbors, before finding our home in Ely. I ended up 'failing retirement,' believing there were more opportunities to serve, by joining the Arrowhead Critical Incident Stress Management Team (C.I.S.M) in 2012, becoming C.I.S.M. Director Outreach Education, and later serving as an Adjunct Law Enforcement Instructor at Vermillion Community College.

In 2017 I further refined what I could offer by creating my own company, Resiliency P.O.W.E.R. Education and developing The Resiliency P.O.W.E.R. Program©, which was specifically designed to address the unique issues, stressors and experiences of public safety, emergency services personnel, medical personnel, and high stress organizations. The proactive programs provide the scientific foundations and specific tools necessary to build a resilient lifestyle at home and at work and education in meditation, including teaching meditation courses and meditation retreats, for over 7 years. Most recently I furthered my meditation credentials with the completion of a 2-year International Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Program with Tara Brach and Jack Kornfield (Spirit Rock Meditation Center in conjunction with the University of Southern California).

Finding ourselves in such a beautiful and unique community as Ely provided wonderful opportunities to make new friendships, pursue outdoor adventures (becoming a Minnesota Master Naturalist, hiking, kayaking, and fishing) enjoying the local art classes, art shows, concerts, history lectures and collecting rocks and minerals.

MEMBERSHIP

If you know someone who might like to join us, bring them to the May banquet to check us out with no pressure. Or, schedule a coffee get together for the person and invite another member or two to talk about 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.