



# Grand Rapids Timberline

NEWS FOR AND ABOUT  
**AAUW GRAND RAPIDS**  
BRANCH MEMBERS

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**MISSION:** *AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research education and advocacy.*

**October 16, 2023**

**Location:** United Methodist Church  
Social/Registration: 5:00-5:45 PM Dinner: 5:45-6:30 PM

**Menu:** Meat Loaf, Baked Potato, Green Beans, Cheesecake  
Cost \$15

**Food Chair:** Lynette Eck

**Food Committee:** Helen Ahlbrecht, Marge Domish, Margaret Barrick, Dianne Anderson

**Business Meeting:** 6:30 pm

**Program:** 6:45 pm

**PROGRAM TOPIC: The League of Women Voters-Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy since 1919**

**Presenter: Michelle Witte, Executive Director**

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota was founded in 1919 to further empower voters and defend democracy after the passage of the 19th Amendment which expanded votes for women.

Michelle Witte has been with the League since May 2017. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Minnesota with a BA in Psychology. She did post graduate work in public affairs with a CORD Foundation Fellowship. She spent several years on the School Board of South Washington County Schools.

**\*\*RSVP to [AAUWRSVPGrandRapids@gmail.com](mailto:AAUWRSVPGrandRapids@gmail.com) by Monday, October 9.**

**President's Message**

Greetings. The fall colors are becoming so vibrant! The ride from Hibbing to Grand Rapids is so beautiful, as I'm sure there are many country roads and county highways that are stunning this time of year. Get out and enjoy the beautiful fall colors if you have the chance!

We had a wonderful turnout for our September meeting and such a great presentation about wild rice. I think we all learned something! We had some guests join us as well. Our October meeting will host the fall book sale and bring a guest to dinner. The cost for your guest to eat is at a discounted cost in October.

The Northland Gathering is quickly approaching, if you are planning to attend and haven't registered, please do so and if you are looking to carpool, let me know and I can through an email out to the group.

Thank you.  
Laurie Clausen, President



**SAVE THESE DATES:**

**Our Book Sale is at our October 16 meeting!**

**The Northland Get Together 2023 is on October 7, 2023, in Duluth.** We will meet at the Coppertop Church (First United Methodist Church), 230 E. Skyline Parkway.

The 2023 Northland Gathering focuses on leadership issues for women in a variety of fields including health, local government, ministry, science, environmentalism, and academia.

Highlights: Welcome from Mayor Emily Larson, two panels with women leaders, and a presentation by award-winning author Linda LeGarde Grover. Further details forthcoming.

Contact Duluth Branch Co-President, Angela George, [Angela8744@msn.com](mailto:Angela8744@msn.com), if you have questions.

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**\*\*\*Travel Treasures**

At the September general meeting, members raised \$61 for the scholarship fund by donating Travel Treasures.

- Dody and Cathy Davies, mother and daughter gardeners, donated a red cabbage, and Dody donated a jar of garlic dill pickles.
- Judy Gorham donated petroglyph pottery from Argentina.
- Cyndy Agle donated whole cherry jam from Door County.

- Karen Karls donated a tote bag with a salmon motif from Alaska. "Salmon is a symbol of abundance, wealth and prosperity." The design is by Joe Wilson, a part of the Coast Salish tribes that live throughout the Pacific Northwest.
- Marlys Mestemacher donated a mug and a jar of honey from Okoboji, Iowa.
- Louise Koglin Fidely also went to Iowa, to Dubuque, donating a turtle paperweight from the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. She went to LaCrosse, WI, and donated a "Bless Our Family" wood block from the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe. She went to North Dakota and the Aitkin Art Center and donated a bookmark and nature prints.
- Anita Firman donated pottery from an art fair. In addition, Anita donates proceeds from the sale of her special greeting cards.

Norma Eppinga and Marlys Mestemacher

**\*\* INTEREST GROUPS \*\***

**\*\*\*LITERATURE**

The AAUW Monday Morning Lit Group will meet on October 2nd at 9:30 A.M. in the private dining room at Majestic Pines. Sharon Quern will lead a discussion of KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON by David Grann. Coffee will be provided. Following our meeting, we will go to the Grand Rapids Area Public Library to choose our November book from the library's "Book Club Book" bags. For more information, contact Nancy Salmi @ 218-326-3147 or [nsalmi@earthlink.net](mailto:nsalmi@earthlink.net).

**\*\*\*WALKING & TALKING**

Starting in October the Walking Group is switching to the winter schedule of walking on Tuesdays at 1 PM. The locations change from week to week but will be in the Grand Rapids area. The group is open to new members interested in walking. If you would like to join us, send your email and cell number to Karen Karls at [k.karls@yahoo.com](mailto:k.karls@yahoo.com).

You will receive an email with the weekly walk location. Members walk when they can or want to; no need to RSVP. We generally walk for about an hour. If the weather is very dreadful, we may cancel and will let you know. However, we are a hardy group of women who value the fresh air and exercise as well as companionship.

**\*\*\*SUNSHINE & CARING**

If any member of AAUW needs a bit of sunshine because of illness or a sympathy card, please let me know and I will send a card from AAUW. You can email me at: [cyndy.agle@gmail.com](mailto:cyndy.agle@gmail.com)



**Meet a Member**

I am Norma VanDam Eppinga. I was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to parents who were children of Dutch immigrants. I graduated from Calvin College, four

blocks from our house, with a major in History and minors in English, Speech and Education. I married Joe Eppinga, the son of Dutch immigrants. We have two daughters.

Our family moved to Minneapolis for Joe's job, then to Grand Rapids, MN, where we owned and operated a small resort for 3 years. I worked for 5 years for the Teen-Age Parent Program, taking care of babies whose mothers attended high school. I began subbing at Grand Rapids High School and did that for over 20 years. I also subbed briefly in California and Florida as Joe and I traveled, and nine years in Florence, AZ, as we settled down.

Our travels began with a trailer able live-aboard sailboat which we took to Texas and Florida. We traded that for a 27-foot sailboat which we motored from Hudson, WI, down rivers and canals and the intracoastal waterway to Punta Gorda, Florida. We spent several winters there and worked briefly at Publix Grocery Store. We also took the boat up the east coast as far as Annapolis, MD, and back to Punta Gorda. When we sold the boat and our house in Grand Rapids, we bought a motor home and traveled the U.S. and Canada. I started working at Target in Cathedral City, CA, and worked several years in MN in the summer and AZ in the winter.

When Joe died in 2016, I moved back to Grand Rapids, MN, and re-joined AAUW. I currently assist Marlys Mestemacher in raising funds for scholarships through such things as Travel Treasures and used book sales.

### **The Story of My Life**

I'm a native Grand Rapidian, born in Itasca Memorial Hospital, now an apartment building, and was raised at 1331 West Fifth St, now Meds One Ambulance Service. I attended grade school at REALLY OLD Forest Lake School, razed to build OLD Forest Lake School, which is now a housing development. Both my Junior and Senior High Schools became housing developments, as well.

My name is Carol Rasmussen. I graduated from high school in 1956 to attend Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. I returned to Grand Rapids 4 years later with a BS degree from the Speech School (now the School of Communications) with minors in English and history, and my new husband. We managed my family's men's store and ski shop on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, NW, now a vacant building.

One day my old high school principal called me and asked if I would like to teach Senior English, and so I did for five years, while having two boys. When I left teaching, one day I ran into one of my old teachers, now a real estate broker, who asked me what I was up to. I told him my boys were in school all day and I was a little bored. He said, "Why don't you get a real estate license and come work for me?" So I studied a book, took a test and the next thing I knew I was selling real estate. This became my lifetime career, and in 1995, after building a business with my second husband, we sold our company and retired. The building we built on South Pokegama Avenue is now an accountant's office.

I joined AAUW in 1960 and my first task was bringing my silver service to a new member tea, the only time I ever used it. We met in the basement of the Carnegie Library, now home of the Herald Review. It was the 60s, Erica Jong was alive and well, but our husbands still called AAUW "The Awful Association of Useless Women!" We started performing plays for children as a service project. Our stage was in the Junior High Cafetorium, now the housing development I mentioned above. Later I got into food planning and preparation, which included organizing a committee to pick recipes and getting a group for each month who would prepare the meals. We met in various churches, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Catholic. Needless to say, it was wonderful when the decision was made for me to find caterers.

My passions are theater and the arts. Three AAUW friends and I decided we wanted to do more than children's plays, so we founded the Grand Rapids Players. I worked early on with the Reif Center and was its first president. I also loved to travel, and I was lucky to travel many places in the world with my husband, and when he and his friend Bob were hunting ducks, my friend Marilyn Rossman and I went on "hunting" trips in many foreign countries. I also love the out of doors and have had many trips to the BWCA, hiked the Inca Trail and the Milford Track, skied in Colorado, and golfed many winters in southern California.

All these things have made me proud to be a native, and have made me who I am. Now I live in The Pillars, enjoy my memories, my friends, book club and my Kindle, and AAUW meetings.

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**A very special thank you to Vicki Holmstrom for doing such a super job on the directories. She took this job over from Arlene Wheaton and this was her first year doing the directory. Vicki spent countless hours on the directory.  
Thank you from all of us!**

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**AAUW Grand Rapids MN Branch General Meeting Minutes  
September 16, 2023**

The Grand Rapids branch met at the United Methodist Church on Monday, March 20, 2023, for a social hour, dinner and program. There were 47 attendees including three guests.

Annette Drew was the speaker and in honor of her subject, wild rice, wild rice was part of the meal. At the end of the meeting, two of the guests joined the branch. They were Eileen Grosland and Beverly Griffen. New directories were given to members and a fall bouquet was presented to Vicki Holstrom to thank her for her hard work on the new directories.

Travel Treasures raised \$61.

Card sales for scholarships were donated by Anita Firman in the amount of \$27.

*Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Dianne Anderson, Secretary*

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**Elaine Thorstenson passed away on Sept 19 after a long illness.  
Elaine joined our group in 2017 when she retired from AT&T and moved to  
Grand Rapids. Elaine was an active member and served as  
Food Committee Chair for 5 years.**

**Cards can be sent to her son at:**

**Corey Thorstenson  
751 152nd Ave N.E.  
Ham Lake, MN. 55304**

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**AAUW was founded by Marion Talbot**, who became the dean of the College of Women at the University of Chicago and a leading figure in higher education. Ellen Swallow Richards was the first woman to earn a degree in chemistry and a leader in the field of home economics.

#### **Minnesota AAUW History**

In 1889, a group of Minnesota women college graduates banded together in the first local branch of what was then called Association of Collegiate Alumnae and later renamed. That was 134 years ago!

AAUW was founded in 1881 so Minnesota started a Branch just 8 years after.

#### **Grand Rapids Lifetime Members**

Did you know that we have 4 Lifetime Members?

To become a Lifetime Member, you must have been a paid member for 50 consecutive years.

#### **Our Lifetime Members are:**

**Sharon Burt  
Shirley Jacobson  
Harriet Lucia  
Marilyn Rossman**

**The 4 members represent over 200 years of membership!**

Each has been a lifetime member for well over 50 years and they have served the board in many positions including president and they have led special interest groups over the years.

We want to let Sharon, Shirley, Harriet and Marilyn know how much we appreciate them and all that they have done over the years to grow and support our branch.

**Thank you from all of us!**

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## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

Our Grand Rapids Branch membership now stands at 77. We have added 3 new members and had one status change since our last newsletter.

Dody Davies, a frequent guest at our activities and primary member in Willmar, has become a dual member of our Branch. Dody helped her daughter host our summer picnic and worked on the September dinner committee. I think we can count on her to help as needed until she leaves us to return to her home in Willmar. Her contact information is in our new directory.

Bev Griffin, a guest of Jan Bilden, joined at the September meeting. She is the one who was walking around with a hand printed name tag because I didn't bother to check under Jan's name tag to find it tucked there by Kathy Pliska. I will know better next time. You can add Bev's contact info on one of the blank sheets at the end of the directory.

1106 McGuire Dr

907 575-7454

[beverlygriffin78@gmail.com](mailto:beverlygriffin78@gmail.com)

BS in Education, Concordia College Moorhead

Eileen Grosland, also a guest of Jan Bilden, joined at the September meeting. Eileen was the last person to be served dinner. She came rushing in at 6pm because of a schedule conflict. Luckily our caterers knew in advance and made sure she was able to eat. Her contact information is listed for you to put into your directory.

2628 Fraser St

218 244-4787

[grosland@paulbunyan.net](mailto:grosland@paulbunyan.net)

BS Moorhead State University

Betty Brandt has been a dual member for several years. Her primary branch of Hutchinson has disbanded. She opted to become a full member of Grand Rapids. Her contact information is in the directory.

## **SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER**

Karen Karls announced at our April meeting that we were going to replace our December basket raffle this fiscal year with a simple plea for donations to a great cause. 18 members have donated so far, and we are ahead of what we raised last year if we do not count the mink coat that Brenda Ruud gave us to raffle off.

You can write a check to "AAUW" and put "scholarship" on the memo line. You may mail them to our Treasurer Julie Skallman at PO Box 5163 Grand Rapids 55744 or bring them to her at any meeting.

Julie Skallman  
[julie.skallman@gmail.com](mailto:julie.skallman@gmail.com)  
651 308-5866

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## **Upcoming ISD 318 Operating Referendum**

By Pam Friesen

On Tuesday, November 7, voters in ISD 318 will consider three ballot questions which, if approved, would provide much needed funding for our area students, staff and schools.

District residents can vote on the referendum on or before election day. Early voting is possible either in person and by absentee ballot. Voters may also cast their ballot on election day, Tuesday, November 7. See **WeAre318.org** for your polling place.

### **Why Pursue a Referendum Now?**

Over the past decade, operational costs have risen significantly faster than the less than 2% annual funding provided by the state. More than 70% of school districts in Minnesota already rely on voter-approved operating levies to maintain student programming and services. ISD 318 does not have a voter-approved operating levy. As a result, our district spends hundreds of dollars less per student than school districts with similar student enrollment.

Over the past four years, the district has reduced its budget by 13% or \$7.4 million. The cuts have affected every aspect of education, including:

- Cutting 70+ staff and administrative positions.
- Eliminated elective courses at Grand Rapids and Bigfork High Schools.
- Eliminated the K-5 art program.
- Eliminated German and Middle School Spanish classes.
- Increased student activity fees in each of the past two years.
- Delayed investments in technology, transportation and safety and security.
- Started charging the community for use of school facilities.

Our community needs young people with the skills and knowledge to work in today's society as well as the ability to grow throughout their lives. Excellence in education is needed more today than ever.

### **What Is Included in The Referendum Plan?**

The plan includes stabilizing finances to maintain current programming and avoid further budget cuts. It would:

- Bring back class offerings and high school electives that students have lost.
- Better attract and retain quality teachers and other staff.
- Maintain smaller class sizes.
- Invest in technology, transportation and safety and security.
- Update curriculum, programming and stronger technical and career education that meet today’s workforce needs.

**What Are Voters Being Asked to Consider?**

**Question One: A \$1,100 per pupil operating levy** that would provide the district with an additional \$4.6 million each year to stabilize our finances and avoid deeper budget cuts.

**Question Two: A \$2.5 million annual capital projects levy** that would restore programming that was lost due to budget cuts, attract and retain quality staff, provide sustainable funding for school safety and invest in technology and school buses. (Question Two cannot pass unless Question One also passes).

**Question Three: A \$300 per pupil operating levy** that would provide the district with an additional \$1.2 million each year to maintain small class sizes, enhance technical and career education and update curriculum and programming. (Question Three can only pass if Question One and Two also passes).

**What Is the Cost to Property Owners?**

If levies are approved, a home valued at \$200,000 would see an estimated property tax of \$30.75 per month starting in 2024. A home valued at \$300,000 would see an estimated property tax increase of \$46.75 per month. Resident can determine the estimated impact on their property taxes by using the tax calculator **WeAre318.org/cost**.

**What Happens If the Referendum Is Rejected?**

The district will face a substantial budget deficit by the 2024-2025 school year. The ISD 318 School Board will need to develop a budget reduction plan that will impact class size, staffing levels, programs and activities.

**Vote Yes and support our area students, staff and schools!**

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**BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS**

Ann	Pederson	5-Oct
Tammy	Pluym	9-Oct
Connie	Anderson	13-Oct
Myrna	Peterson	13-Oct
Cathy	Davies	21-Oct
Marva Jean	Hutchens	22-Oct
Marilyn	Fritze	24-Oct

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**Websites for local, state and national AAUW information:**

Our Grand Rapids AAUW blog: <http://grandrapidsaauw.blogspot.com/>

MN AAUW website: <http://aauw-mn.aauw.net>

National AAUW website: [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)

**ADVANCING EQUITY FOR WOMEN & GIRLS** – FOR MORE INFORMATION

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)

AAUW MINNESOTA [www.aauwmn.net](http://www.aauwmn.net)