



# 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.*

**November 13, 2023**

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

**Menu:** Pork Loin, Au Gratin Potatoes, Side Salad, Crème de Menthe Cake  
Cost \$15

**Food Chair:** Vicki Holstrom

**Food Committee:** Kathy Spencer, Susan LaVelle, Louise Koglin Fidely, Kathy Pliska

**Business Meeting:** 6:30 pm

**Program:** 6:45 pm

**PROGRAM TOPIC: goMARTI – Minnesota’s Autonomous Rural Transit Initiative**

**Presenters: Lisa Arnold and Myrna Peterson, Co-Chairs Mobility Mania – Accessibility For All**

Mobility Mania is a non-profit small organization with a mission to increase accessibility awareness to make Itasca County the showcase of accessibility in Minnesota and to raise finances for local accessibility needs. The goMARTI self-driving shuttle pilot is the result of a unique partnership of multiple groups, Mobility Mania included. It has a shared goal of increasing accessibility and transportation options for residents and visitors in Grand Rapids, MN.

Lisa Arnold has 27+ years of experience working with people with different abilities in her career. Various employers include Wheelchairs Plus and Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital. She is currently employed by Itasca County Health and Human Services.

Myrna Peterson is a retired educator after an auto accident 28 years ago. Since that time she has been an advocate for differently-abled people of all ages. She currently serves on the Minnesota Council On Disability, the Governor's Council For Connected and Automated Vehicles and the Governor's Advisory Council On Assistive Technology. Myrna is also active in her church and is on several boards and commissions supporting the arts and social justice within the Grand Rapids community.

**\*\*RSVP to [AAUWRSVPGrandRapids@gmail.com](mailto:AAUWRSVPGrandRapids@gmail.com) by Monday, November 6.**

### **President's Message**

Greetings AAUW members.

We have had some great speakers this fall, and I am looking forward to some more very interesting programs. Many of you have been bringing guests to our dinners and we have had several of them join. Great job! Our holiday gathering will be here before you know it. We will be gathering on Monday, December 11, at the Forest Lake Restaurant again.

Thank you.  
Laurie Clausen, President

### **December Dinner Choices at Forest Lake Restaurant**

Choice of: Caprese Chicken, Beef Tenderloin Tips or Shrimp Linguine.  
Includes Ceaser salad, fresh green beans, bread loaves and dessert  
Cost: \$30 includes tax and tip

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

Thanks to all who donated books and travel treasures, and to all who made a purchase and/or donated to the scholarship fund. Book sales gained \$135.25 and travel treasures gained \$48.00.

Thanks to Karen Karls who once again took the remaining books to the Grand Rapids library for their sales.

- Kathleen Spencer brought from Vienna a Christmas ornament of Empress Elisabeth of Austria, and from the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia, handmade lavender and lemon soap.
- Jean Gardner donated a 2024 desk calendar from the National Parks of Utah.
- Sue Mattson donated lavender bath salts and soap, and chocolate, from Croatia and Slovenia.

- Nita Firman donated a hand-painted box from an art show.
- Kathy Pliska donated two lunch tickets to a salad luncheon at United Methodist Church.
- Dody and Cathy Davies donated produce from their gardens, beets and Patterson onions.
- Cathy Davies also donated a Christmas ornament beaded by her dear friend Rev. Terri Stagner Collier. Cathy writes "When I told her that our AAUW group has raffles to raise \$ for scholarships for women, she donated this exquisite piece.'

Norma Eppinga and Marlys Mestemacher

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### **Northland Gathering**

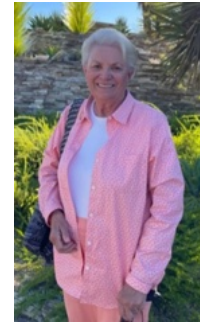
The annual Northland Gathering was held in Duluth this year with 4 members from our branch attending. The Northland area consists of 6 branches—Hibbing, Duluth, Brainerd, Virginia, Chisholm and Grand Rapids. We met at the Coppertop Church with the theme -"Leadership Reimagined" with 2 panels throughout the day.



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

#### **\*\*\*LITERATURE**

The AAUW Monday Morning Lit Group will meet on Monday, November 6th, at 9:30 A.M. in the private dining room at Majestic Pines. Jill Bilden will lead our discussion of THE BOOK WOMAN OF TROUBLESOME CREEK by Kim Michele Richardson. Coffee will be provided. For more information, contact Nancy Salmi at 218-326-3147 or [nsalmi@earthlink.net](mailto:nsalmi@earthlink.net).



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

The Walking Group walks 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).

The walking group was invited to walk from Nancy Raymond's home to see all the beautiful maple trees.



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

Greetings AAUW Sisters!

My name is Lynette Eck and I've been an AAUW member in Grand Rapids for over forty years. Marianna Diekmann recruited me shortly after my family and I moved to Grand Rapids.

I was born in Grand Rapids, the second of four daughters of George and Helen Brown. I grew up and attended school in Hibbing and was fortunate to attend the gorgeous Hibbing High School from seventh through twelfth grades and two years of "junior college".

Back in the late 50s and 60s there were no organized sports for girls, but I participated in many school activities including cheerleading, choir, community plays, GAA, Girls' League, Future Teachers of America and our school newspaper. I was also a cheerleader in junior college. I made many lifelong friendships and was influenced by some outstanding teachers.

I attended St. Cloud State University and graduated with a baccalaureate degree in elementary education and a minor in library science. I have a life license and later added ABE endorsement. Upon graduation I accepted a teaching position in Little Falls, Mn where I remained for six years.

During that time, I married a high school classmate, Roger Eck, after he'd completed two tours in Vietnam with the US Marine Corps. Roger became a deputy sheriff in Morrison County where Little Falls is the county seat. We remained there until Roger was accepted to the MN State Patrol academy. Our first son, Michael, was born during Roger's fifth week of his training in the patrol academy. Upon completion of his MSP training Roger was assigned to West Metro District 2500. I then resigned my teaching position in Little Falls to relocate to Anoka, MN.

Our second son, Brian, was born two years later. I had been substituting teaching in the Anoka Hennepin district when I was offered a position as a Title 1 teacher where I remained until Roger accepted a transfer to District 3100, the Grand Rapids station. We moved here on our tenth wedding anniversary.

I applied for and was hired to start an Adult Basic Education program for 5 school districts through Itasca Community College. The state board of education had begun an initiative of developing broad based adult basic education programs throughout Minnesota encompassing low-level basic literacy skills, medial literacy, English as a second language and GED training through local efforts. Previously the only adult education programs were for the GED level. The administration at ICC applied for and received an initial grant to cover five school districts: Grand Rapids/Bigfork, Coleraine/Greenway, Deer River, Hill City and Remer/Northland. I started class sites in these districts where I was the ABE instructor. I eventually hired local instructors to teach in these districts.

After an initiative from the Department of Corrections to start ABE classes in county jails, I approached Sheriff Russ Johanssen offering to go into the jail and start ABE classes at no cost, initially, to Itasca County so that it would be in compliance before the state mandated ABE programs. He accepted and Itasca County was one of the first in the state to offer ABE to inmates. I taught the jail classes three mornings a week. The next year and subsequent years, Itasca County contributed funds to continue its ABE program mandate. I'm proud to say that during my tenure, thirteen inmates took and passed their GED equivalency tests while incarcerated. I sought donations from local civic organizations to help defray the costs of taking the GED test by inmates and people attending ABE classes who couldn't afford to pay for taking GED tests.

I was lead ABE teacher for eleven years until AEOA took over the ABE program and I accepted a position with the University of Minnesota to coordinate an alcohol research program called Project Northland. Project Northland was a research project situated in northeastern Minnesota because of the high incidences of alcohol use and abuse as determined by the U of Mn from data received from the US Department of Education. This effort began when the cohort was determined to be the Class of 1998. Eight school districts in northeastern Minnesota were approached by the "U" to participate. I was selected to coordinate the program for ISD 318 and the cohort were fifth graders in Grand Rapids and Bigfork and continued until they graduated in 1998.

I instituted annual curriculums whose purpose was to educate students about alcohol and delay and reduce the incidences of the use and abuse of alcohol with these students. We did baseline surveys and subsequent surveys annually. This cohort's survey upgraded the exiting Minnesota Student Survey as it was more comprehensive.

I received extensive training by U of Mn professionals who determined northeastern Mn was in need of better alcohol education for young people because of the data they collected. They developed curriculum and community studies that were based upon sound practices. Their belief was that studying the effects of the Project Northland curriculum on a specific age group in a controlled setting would help change the attitudes and access of alcohol by youth. The goal was to encourage young people to resist alcohol and the temptation to use and abuse alcohol throughout life.

I worked directly with students in classrooms, with families, with community influencers and law enforcement to promote the goals of Project Northland.

The success of Project Northland and the curriculum has been replicated in school districts around the country and in several countries around the world. I wish I had been able to view how these Class of 1998 students as adults use alcohol and how they serve as examples to their children.

After Project Northland ended and the Class of 1998 graduated, I was hired as the Safe and Drug Free Schools coordinator for ISD 318 until I retired. After retirement,

I volunteered as a reading and math tutor in the third grade until Covid ended my time going into the classroom.

We're proud of our sons who both are successful in their dream jobs. Mike is a Minnesota State Trooper like his father. In fact, he's a lieutenant in the West Metro District 2400 and wears his father's lieutenant badge. He's married with three children and two grandchildren. Our great grandsons are Oliver, age five who's in kindergarten, and Nolan who is three.

Brian is a CAD designer with TEAM Industries. He has nine US patents, three Canadian patents and one European patent for clutches and brake systems in snowmobiles, 4-wheelers, golf carts, etc. He's married and he and his wife are clearing land and preparing to build a home on 10 acres of land they purchased five years ago.

I've had several roles in AAUW starting with being a board member, treasurer for 5 years and co-president with Colleen Nardone, I then took over collecting data for the directory and seeing to its printing and distribution for eleven years. I also have been the October food chair for several years. Thank you to AAUW for keeping me engaged and informed. Love this group and its mission.

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***Believe you can and you are halfway there.***

...Eleanor Roosevelt

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**Welcome, Julie!**

We have another new member! Julie Karels attended our October meeting as a guest of Vicki Holmstrom. Julie taught senior English for many years and said she loved every moment of it. She has only been in our community for a short time so please make a point of introducing yourself. Please add her contact information on the blank pages of your directory.

Julie Karels  
603 NE 7th St  
Grand Rapids 55744  
320 761-5368  
BS English Secondary Education  
University of Minnesota 1974

October and April are special recruiting months for our branch. Guest meals are only \$7 and if they join at the meeting, they qualify for half price on the National portion of our membership under the Shape Our Future campaign. Julie took advantage of this and only paid \$54 rather than \$90.

Julie Skallman - Treasurer

## **Lifetime Members Update**

Did you know that we have 5 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  
Colleen Nardone  
Harriet Lucia  
Marilyn Rossman

The 5 members represent over 250 years of membership! Each has been a lifetime member for well over 50 years and they have served on the board in many positions including president and they have led special interest groups over the years.

We want to let the members know how much we appreciate what they have done for our organization.

In September Dody Davies joined our branch as a dual member. Dody is a Lifetime Member in Willmar where she has been a member for over 50 years.

***Thank you all for your dedicated support!***

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### **AAUW Grand Rapids MN Branch General Meeting Minutes October 16, 2023.**

The Grand Rapids branch met at the United Methodist Church on Monday, October 16, 2023, for a social hour, dinner and program. Thirty-eight members attended, as well as four guests and the speaker. One guest joined that evening and two guests took home AAUW brochures.

The fall book sale took place to raise monies for the scholarship fund and Travel Treasures added to the total funds raised.

The evening's speaker was Michelle Witte, Executive Director of the League of Voters of Minnesota. Her presentation was titled "Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy since 1919."

*Minutes respectfully submitted,  
Dianne Anderson, Secretary*

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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)