



Northwoods News - October 2024

MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS ANDREA AND LINDA

Greetings!

It's been a busy month for our branch! Two candidate forums - MN House District 3a and the Ely City Council - were organized by our branch's Public Policy Committee in collaboration with the Ely Rotary. Both were held at the Minnesota North College auditorium with good crowds attending and both newspapers covering the events. We heard many comments thanking AAUW for providing this valuable service for our community. The forums can be viewed by going to YouTube then typing - Ely MN Candidate Forum 2024.

We had a voter registration drive at Minnesota North College in collaboration with Ely EMPOWER on September 18. Over 30 students were registered and many more took the instructions on how to register on their own computers or phones! It's SO important that everyone vote in this election.

Our branch members picked up trash along the two-mile stretch of Highway 169 on September 13. A big thank you to the members (including two 80+

year olds!) who endured a hot morning to clean up our section of the road. The two Adopt-a-Highway signs that say “AAUW Ely Branch” give our branch more visibility in the community. A few members have stated that these signs let them know that there was an AAUW in town and resulted in them joining our branch.

Our branch members have also been busy planning for the Northland Get Together on Saturday, October 12. As you may know, this event is held each fall and is organized by one of the six AAUW branches in the Northland. This year is our branch’s turn to host it. It’s fun to get together and learn about topics important to us. The topic this year is “Advocacy” and how organizations in our communities can work together to advocate for others and provide support systems to make our communities stronger – something that the many great groups do well here in Ely. We will also discuss what other branches are doing for their programs and fundraising. Make sure to get your registration form and check to Linda by October 7. It should be a fun day (10:00 – 2:30).

Please join us for the next branch meeting on October 8 at the Grand Ely Lodge. Our speaker, Marolyn Matthys, an Ely business owner, is going to talk about starting her business and the building of the Log Cabin Coffee building. 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!

Don't forget to send in your money for the Northland Gathering, or you can bring your check, card, or cash to the October 8 meeting.

October 8, 5:30 PM, GEL - Branch Meeting

Marolyn Matthys, an Ely business owner, will discuss starting up her drive-through coffee shop and her construction of the Log Cabin Coffee

building.

November 12, 5:30 PM, GEL - Branch Meeting

Alexia Springer, AAUW member, owner of Ely Bike and Kicksled, and Program Coordinator for the Ely Folk School, will present on her adventure of hiking the Appalachian Trail.

December 10, 5:30 PM, GEL - Branch Meeting

Holiday celebration with auction and raffle.

January 14, 5:30 PM, GEL - Branch Meeting

Abby Dare, business owner, creator, and manager of The Meadows Gallery & Studios, will discuss her small business ownership journey and the process of making The Meadows what it is today. She may also share a bit about the path of moving to the Ely area to work at one of the area camps, and the transitional process to finding her place in town for the long term.

February 11, 5:30 PM, GEL - Branch Meeting

Jan Guerin, AAUW member, has taught English Literature, Film Studies, and Communications both at the high school and college level. She will facilitate our large group discussion on the novel *My Antonia* by Willa Cather. All are welcome to the book discussion, whether or not you've read the book.

March 11, 5:30 PM, GEL - Branch Meeting

Nichole Boitz, owner of Studio North Dance and Fitness, will speak about the development of her business, which was started several years ago, and the programs and facilities available there.

April 8, 5:30 PM, GEL - Branch Meeting

Annual Meeting.

May 13, 5:30 PM, GEL - Branch Meeting

End of year banquet and silent auction.

If you need a ride to a meeting or event, please be sure to contact Linda Sutton!

BOARD MEETINGS are held the fourth Monday of the month.

VERMILION CAMPUS FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET

By Darlene Nemanich

On Thursday, September 26, 2024, I had the opportunity as representative of the scholarship committee to attend the Vermilion Campus Foundation 2024 scholarship banquet at the Grand Ely Lodge.

Over \$150,000 was awarded by the 50-plus scholarships sponsored by area clubs, businesses, and families at this banquet honoring students who received their scholarships in April 2024.

The Ely branch of AAUW presented two \$2,000 scholarships to Taya Miller, a second-year vet tech student, and Dana Hines, who is taking her generals before transferring to Hibbing to enter the nursing program.

I had an opportunity to visit with both of the ladies. They both were so appreciative and once again sent their thank-yous to our branch.

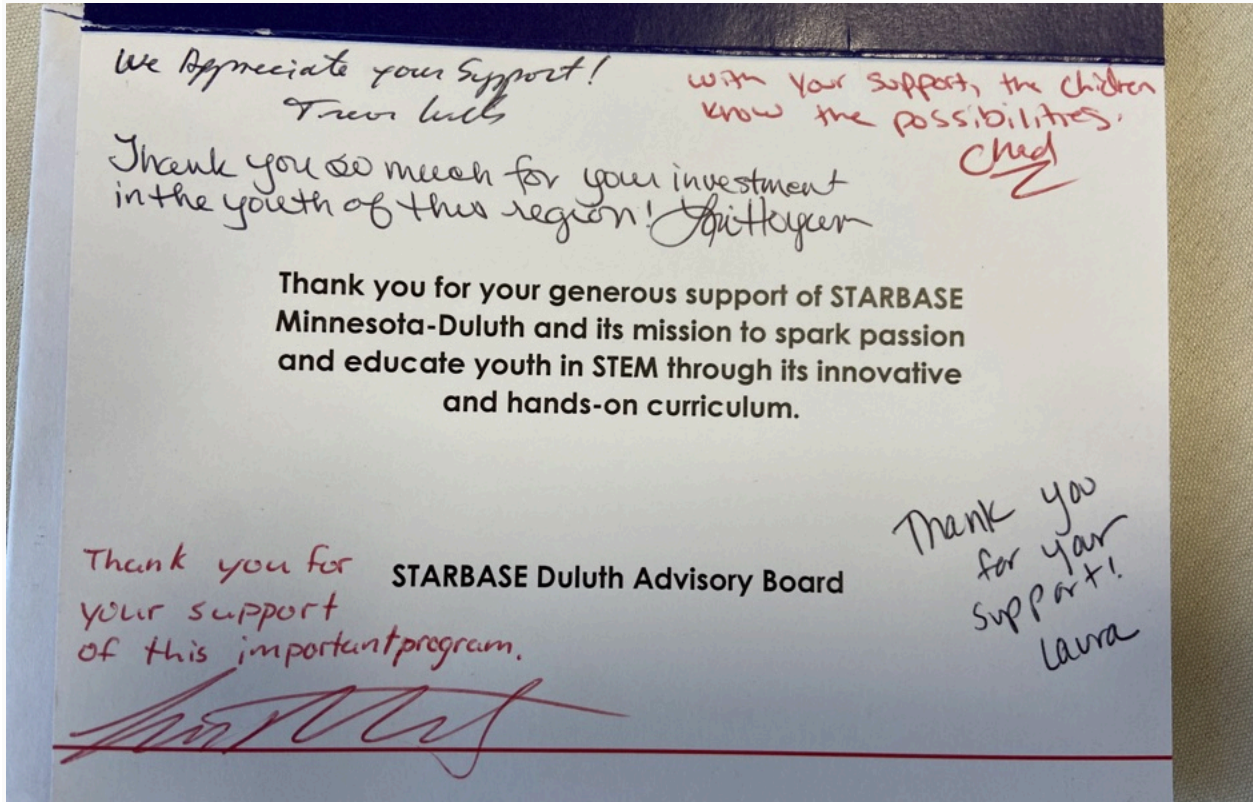
Also recognized at the banquet were long-time member Lucy Diesslin and her husband Butch as this year's Vermilion Supporter Award 2024. Lucy and

Butch have been strong advocates of education by setting up various scholarships at colleges of their choice, including Minnesota North Vermilion campus, to help students continue their education. Lucy has been a member of our branch for many years and has served in many capacities locally and at the state level. Congratulations, Lucy!



THANK-YOU NOTE FROM STARBASE

Our branch donated \$500 to the STARBASE organization, and we received this thank-you card from them.



VOTER REGISTRATION AT MINNESOTA NORTH VERMILION



PUBLIC POLICY

By Mary Setterholm

Your Public Policy group has been very busy during September. Working with Rotary, we held two candidate forums, and working with EMPOWER, we spent community day at the college registering students to vote. You will read and see more about all those activities elsewhere in this newsletter.

My article this month is personal. When I review the AAUW public policy priorities for '23-'25, these lines are standing out for me today:

1. Basic to all of AAUW's public policy efforts is the understanding that true equity requires a balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the community.
2. AAUW recognizes that gun violence is a public health and safety crisis.
3. To guarantee equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society, AAUW advocates freedom from violence and fear of

violence, including hate crimes, in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities.

My grandson's 6th grade flag football team walked to a local St. Paul park for their usual practice this week. It's a public park, so there were families playing together, enjoying a lovely fall day in a small community park. Until a young man pulled an automatic rifle from a duffel bag and began shooting. The coach was panicked and yelled "RUN" to the team. My grandson and his closest friend ran all the way back to school to tell the staff in the office what happened. As best we know, no one was injured. But these 11-year-olds are left wondering whether people fell to the ground to be safe or if they were shot.

What have we come to? Why will we allow our children to fear being killed when going to the park or school? No one needs an automatic weapon of war to protect themselves in civilian life. What is the right of these children to feel safe and cared for? We must pass improved gun safety laws. An upcoming election and our work to advocate better, stronger laws can make a difference.

When it hits this close to home, it makes the importance of these priorities very real. While Minnesota passed some gun safety legislation, there were other "safe storage" laws that did not get finalized. Nationally, the assault weapons ban has been discussed but never passed.

When voting, pay attention and vote for those who will fight to pass safety laws. Ask specific questions of candidates when face to face with them to determine where they stand.

We are all activists, and we all tire of fighting for what seems will never change. We must, for the children, continue this work.



FUNDRAISING

By Kay Vandervort

Planning has begun for the Christmas auction/bucket raffle (which occurs at the December banquet). We're particularly looking for:

- Experiences (can you teach a small group to bake something fabulous, or do you have a favorite craft to share? This category is only limited by our imaginations.)
- Baked goods (just let me know what you will bring.)

But that doesn't mean we won't welcome whatever you think would go well. Candles, pottery, quilted items, gift certificates, books with wine/coffee/tea/chocolate. If you have those items, please bring them to the November meeting or drop them off at Kay's house by December 1.

MEET OUR MEMBERS!

Say hello to Betsy Flaten!

I'm a California girl. I grew up on an orange grove in Riverside, California, where I was active in 4-H. We raised chickens--now you'd call them free range as they roosted in our orange trees--a few beef cattle (a new-born calf spent a night in our kitchen) and a Gus the goose (Gussie, actually, we found out) and her ducklings (they imprinted on Gus) and a number of cats--that adopted us.

At one time we had a huge boxes of chicks in the living and dining room of our big old Arts and Crafts house.

My Dad taught us to love the outdoors with trips to the mountains and time exploring tide pools at the beach. Because my parents were from the midwest, my Dad from Iowa and Minnesota and Mom from Nebraska, I became interested in Carleton College and Minnesota.

So now I'm a Minnesota girl. Came here to attend college, majored in history, met John Flaten (it's our 60th anniversary year), taught school, and eventually settled in a suburb of Minneapolis where we raised our two daughters.

When John retired, we moved to Ely to be near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. We love the outdoors--canoe trips, hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

We have Julie, a very sweet terrier mix, and we have five granddaughters.

For hobbies and interests: I tend to get involved in local history projects--there's some interesting history up here in northern Minnesota—and I'm drawn to human rights and social justice issues. AAUW and public policy are a good fit! I like to garden, though it's me against the deer! I make good salads, but John says I've retired from cooking (mostly true) and for a period of time I got into antiques. I like the country stuff--pine furniture and old bowls--but have run out of room to collect any more.

We now spend winters in Arizona and AAUW has gone with me—especially public policy. Our East Mesa Branch is active in speaking out against banned books and speaking up for teaching accurate history. We're working to pass an amendment to preserve our reproductive rights. Guess what...I'm now an Arizona girl as well!

(And I do have one secret: My name used to be Betsy Ross.)



New members!

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

Please welcome:

Sue Polege susanpolege@gmail.com

Robyn Keyport robynkeyport@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP

If you know someone who might like to join us, bring them to any meeting 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.