



Northwoods News - April 2025

MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS ANDREA AND LINDA

Our branch Annual Meeting is coming up on April 8 where the membership will be voting for the board positions of Secretary and Vice-President of Program along with approving the branch's budget for Fiscal Year 2025 which begins on July 1. Many times, any increase in branch dues is approved by the membership at the annual meeting; fortunately, the Ely AAUW Board decided that Ely branch dues will remain the same this year.

Since our branch has a number of new members, we thought a review of the dues structure may be helpful. Ely AAUW members pay dues at three levels: national, state, and branch. All dues are typically paid in a single payment. Ely AAUW dues will be \$90, an increase of \$2 effective April 1. Of the \$90, \$83 may be tax deductible as AAUW National and AAUW Minnesota are 501c3 organizations. Because our Ely AAUW branch is a 501c4 organization, dues and donations to the local branch are not deductible. Local branch dues remain the same and are \$7 per member per year (about \$500 total) and contribute to

programs and scholarships although a vast majority of branch income is derived from our silent auctions/bucket raffles and outright donations. State dues at \$9 remain the same and are used for grants to branches, the state annual meeting, and general expenses. National dues increased by \$2 to \$74 effective April 1. Some areas that national dues are used for:

- **Education and Advocacy:** Member dues help support AAUW's public policy and member advocacy programs, which are now vitally important to defending higher education and rights for women on campus.

- **Administrative Support:** Assist branch treasurers with dues processing, Community Hub management, IRS 990N filings, branding materials, and toolkits (e.g., DEI Toolkit, College/University Member Toolkit).

- **Website Support:** Update and manage ~500 branch and state websites and provide ongoing Site Resources support.

- **Member Trainings:** Hold regular virtual member gatherings and training programs. Here are a couple of examples of upcoming programs (and programs can be reviewed at a later date if you are unable to attend the webinar).

AAUW Advocacy Strategies for In-District Meetings

April 8 | 7:00 p.m. ET

Face-to-face advocacy can drive real change. This session will guide members on how to set up in-district meetings with members of Congress, maximize town hall participation, and effectively use key talking points during the upcoming April congressional recess. Learn how to make your voice heard. Register [Here](#)

Funding Futures: Understanding Changes to Sex and Gender-Based Scholarship Programs

April 15 | 7:00 p.m. ET

Navigating legal changes to sex-based scholarships can be complex. This interactive session will provide information to AAUW branches on funding scholarships amid evolving regulations while staying true to our

mission of advancing education for women and girls. Space is limited. Register [Here](#)

Check out the **2025 Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative (WEEI) Webinar** [schedule](#) for live training courses.

- **Member Engagement:** Organize member-led groups and committees like Lobby Corps, national committees, and coordinate AAUW's member advocacy through 2-Minute Activist. [AAUW Action Network](#) – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881

- **Speaker Engagement:** Offer national speakers for branch meetings and state conventions.

- **Real-Time Support:** Connect Team provides daily assistance and semi weekly "Office Hours" for member leaders.

So your dues provide vital support for AAUW's mission to advance gender equity through research, education, and advocacy.

Join us for the next branch meeting on April 8 at the Grand Ely Lodge. This will also be our branch's annual meeting. Come early at 5:00 for social time; the meeting starts at 5:30. Hope to see you there!

Andrea and Linda

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

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

May 12, 5:30 PM, GEL - Branch Meeting (Note the change to Monday, not Tuesday! Thanks!)
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 Monday after the branch meeting each month.

STARBASE STEM SCHOLARSHIPS

By Andrea Landro-Pike

Our branch and Ely EMPOWER presented scholarships to Ely fifth graders Sophia Ferrante, Macy Coombe, and Sunny Weissert to attend the STARBASE STEM Camp in Duluth. The total scholarships are valued at over \$1,500.

The four-day STARBASE Explorers Camp provides students with hands-on experience with rocket engineering, CAD design, GPS navigation, rover programming, earth science investigation, and exploration. Students also gain real-world knowledge about exciting careers in the STEM fields in our region and beyond.

Pictured are Sunny Weissert, Sophia Ferrante, and Macy Coombe.



NORTHWOODS YOUNG WRITERS CAMP

The Ely branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) presented two scholarships to Ely teens for summer writing camp. Freshman Elena Freking and junior Aila Harding received \$500 each toward the Northwoods Young Writers Camp. This will be their third year attending this camp, which was founded by author Mary Casanova in 2019. Author Margi Preus and playwright Cristina Pippa will also facilitate camp sessions, which run through June on Woman Lake. The purpose of the camp is to create a sacred space not just for writing, but for sharing ideas and learning the art of critiquing. Two faculty from Ely will chaperone this year: Heather Cavalier and Madeline Olson. For more information about the camp, please visit writingcamp.org.

Caption: Pictured are Aila Harding, Elena Freking, Darlene Nemanich, Barb Soderberg, and Sarah Paro.



I Went to Albania by Accident **An Eye-Opening Adventure Into a Post-Communist World**

By Linda Olson Bergum

I wanted to go to Greece. Albania was part of the package, so I said, "OK, sure." This turned out to be a great decision and the most interesting and sobering part of my trip.

To visit a country emerging from 40 years as the most isolated, repressed country in the world is an experience I wish we all could have. It changed everything for me. Reading about repression is one thing. Talking with survivors brings home the dangers of totalitarian government. I was told, "While you were living your best life in the '60s and '70s with rock n roll, education, travel and fun, and plenty of food, we were starving and forgotten by the rest of the world."

The photos are from Albania's Museum of Secret Surveillance (Albania's KGB), also known as The House of Leaves, because it is actually quite beautiful and covered with vines.

"What was it like under communist rule?" I asked. This is what I was told and are direct quotes:

- Private ownership of any property was forbidden.
- Apartments were state owned and housing was assigned.
- Farms and farm animals were confiscated.
- Schools that were closed under fascism reopened under communism with a strict Stalinist communist curriculum.
- First they took all the cars. There were no cars on the streets, we were to walk or to take public transport. You might have a bicycle if you were fortunate. We only saw official vehicles on the streets, and that was rare. There was no traffic. We walked and played in the streets.
- We were always hungry.
- Religion was forbidden. All churches, synagogues and mosques were destroyed or converted to a government building.
- Travel within or outside the country was forbidden.

- Outside music, news, magazines and books, TV and movies - all forbidden.
- Listening devices were everywhere. Handbags, radios, telephones, in the walls of every home and building.
- Neighbors, children, and family members were recruited to report any infraction.
- Those accused were executed or sent to labor camps.
- Judges, lawyers, students and teachers were the initial targets.
- Eventually everyone was heavily surveilled. An estimated 100,000 people were detained, and 10,000-25,000 executed.

Today, in the capital city of Tirana, murals make the brutalist architecture less ugly.

This mural is on a building in the center of Tirana. The left side of the photo shows the balconies of the grey concrete apartment building.

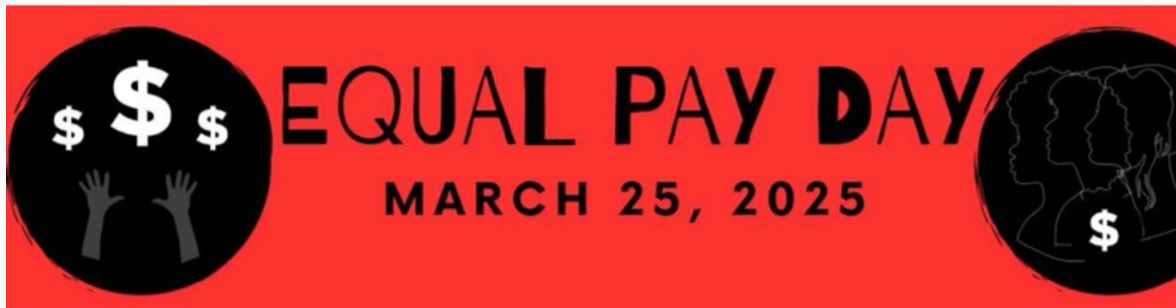


This article is limited to the communist years, 1944-1992. However, I do not want to give the impression that this is how it is now. Albania is a beautiful, modernizing country with wonderful people, and is an emerging tourist destination. I encourage you to go.



PUBLIC POLICY

By Mary Setterholm



March 25 was Equal Pay Day, the date calculated to be the point where women's earnings catch up to what men earned in the previous year. It's a stark reminder of how far women still have to go to close gender and race-based pay gaps, and what AAUW members can do to bring about gender equity in the workplace.

For the first time in 20 years, the pay gap widened in 2023. Women working full-time, year-round were paid 83 cents for every dollar paid to men, compared to 84 cents in 2022. The gap is even more pronounced for Black women (66 cents), Native American women, and Latina women (58 cents). Women continue to be underpaid and undervalued and that the protections won over the years to protect economic civil rights are under renewed attack.

We need national public policies that give women the same freedom and opportunities to rise in their careers that men have long been able to count on. These include the Paycheck Fairness Act, which protect workers from retaliation for discussing pay, banning the use of prior salary history, and codifying pay data collection, the Healthy Families Act, to provide employees the right to earn job-protected time off when they or their loved ones are sick, hurt, or getting medical care, as well as for needs in connection with sexual or domestic violence, and the FAMILY Act, to ensure that every worker, no matter the size of their employer or if they are self-employed or part-time, has access to paid leave to care for a family member following a serious medical event.

We need to erase Equal Pay Day from the calendar. As AAUW members, let's renew our commitment to oppose attacks on civil rights laws and diversity programs and advocate for policies that support women's economic security.

FILM FEST STUDENT LUNCHEON

AAUW and EMPOWER provided funding for the student luncheon during the Ely Film Festival on March 14. Many students from area schools came to see independent films; we were happy to provide them with a free, hot lunch in the middle of their day. The 167 students were served sloppy joes, macaroni and cheese, and dessert at the Ely Senior Center. There were also 31 educators served at the Ely Folk School. Keith Secola entertained students with his guitar and wooden flute during the event, and a few students jammed with him.

Desserts were provided by Jackie Ender, Kay Vandervort, Sarah Paro,

Ruth Katz, Eva Stevens, Linda Sutton, and Andrea Landro-Pike. Ladies who did set-up, serving and clean-up were Jan Guerin, Peggy Kronick, Pam Ransom, Jodi Chaffin, Caroline Owens, Andrea Landro-Pike, and Di White.

AAUW and EMPOWER each donated \$600 for the student luncheon. Using current federal guidelines for volunteer hours and mileage, the total dollar amount for AAUW would be \$1,405.93. Di White contacted Jacob White regarding the volunteer hours provided by AAUW; he has agreed to screen a slide advertising our July Garden Party if we can provide the art work. Do we have a member with graphic design skills who can do this? We will also be on the marquee prior to the Garden Party.





FUNDRAISING



May Banquet

Once again, we'll do an auction at the May Banquet which is scheduled for Monday, May 12 with bidding starting at 5:00.

We are hoping that everyone will be able to donate toward one or more of our auctions during the year. It doesn't have to be much. We find there's no best guess on what people will bid on so if you're unsure, the answer is yes. Items valued between \$10 and \$25 will be placed in the bucket raffle or combined with other items in the silent auction. Our bidders particularly like food and experiences.

If you plan to bring food items, let Kay know at the April meeting and bring them before 4:45 the evening of the banquet. Other items can be brought to the April meeting or dropped off at Kay's house, 629 E. Boundary St, before April 28.

Summer Garden Party

The Summer Garden Party will once again be in July at Barb and Kurt Soderberg's house. This is the event that brings in the most revenue and the most new members so start thinking about what you could donate, or who you could bring as a guest.

A few ideas for donations:

- If you're dividing perennials, place a few in a pot, label them and nurture them so they're lovely in time for the garden party
- Garden pots or decorations
- Great things to do like pontoon ride or learning how to bake bread
- Art, pottery, quilts
- Accessories such as purses, scarfs, and hats
- Kitchen items and food of course

Bring your pig bank to the April meeting. We'll empty them and get of picture of our pig parade. Then you can start filling again to turn in at the September meeting.

POP UP! It's Your Birthday! It's My Birthday, It's Everyone's Birthday!

Mark your calendar for Sunday May 18, 2:30 at the Folk School. Bring a wrapped gift that you made or that cost you no more than \$10. We'll

play party games, welcome back our snowbirds, and get to know each other better. There'll be presents, cake or course and fun. We'll also pass a hat for donations toward our scholarships and mission projects.

MEET OUR MEMBERS!

SAY HELLO TO MARY LOUISE ICENHOUR!

My name is Mary Louise Mavetz Krall Icenhour. I appreciate this opportunity to share with my sisters in the Ely Branch AAUW a short biography of my life. I have chosen to identify four distinct events which had a major impact of who I am today.

1. Learning how to knit the winter of 1948:

During a very chilly January Saturday afternoon in Ely, I received a phone call from my neighbor, Sharon Call, (whose father was on of our local dentists) asking me if I was interested in learning how to knit. Knitting was very far from my idea of fun, but Saturday January afternoons was basically waiting for the late afternoon radio shows to begin. So, I agreed to join her and I began to learn basic knitting from the owner of the Knit Shop, Vivian Maaenpaa, who became one of the most effective teachers I have ever known. She was a knowledgeable, supportive woman who started me on the lifelong hobby of knitting and working with fibers. I still continue to knit, crochet, weave sweet grass baskets. It's truly my "go to" for complete relaxation not to mention Christmas and Birthday gifts for whomever I know well enough to know their stocking size! Vivian had four chairs in her small yarn shop which would be occupied by young Ely girls. We all started on the basic garter stitch scarf. Our second project was four needle socks. No one questioned the major jump in knitting projects. After our second project of learning to knit socks, we gave up our "chair" for the next round of prospective knitting students. I think about Vivian every time I pick up my knitting needles.

2. Girl Scouts:

I began my journey as a Girl Scout (in Ely) by first becoming a "Brownie." It's interesting to note how that term has changed its meaning since 1946. I can still sing the songs I learned during our weekly meetings. As an example, if you are ever interested in my rendition of "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider," I can sing it like Maria Callas!! After a very somber ceremony called a "Fly Up," we became Girl Scouts which I remained until High School graduation. Becoming a Girl Scout taught me basic camping skills and crystalized my devotion to all things of nature e.g. clean water and air, trees, rocks, silence. Currently protecting the environment is my main personal project. I am an active member of Ely's Climate Group and have recently been named as a voting member of the newly formed Ely Green Team, a working subcommittee of the Ely City Council. As a member I will be actively engaged in assisting Ely's effort to accomplish the next Step in achieving Minnesota's Green Step Program as established by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Thank you, Girl Scouts of America, for instilling in me energy and devotion to environmental issues.

3. Anti War Protests and the Women's Movement:

This is a major factor of my life story. Prior to 1968 and the Eugene McCarthy antiwar campaign I was committed to the quiet life of a mother, wife, church member, cook and housecleaner and all the traditional behaviors of a life dutifully lead by following the rules of traditional society if not the Church and my Slovenian culture. However, in the late 1960s, I was also concerned about the morality of the Vietnam War. Simultaneously the first edition of MS magazine was published (and devoured by me) and I found my voice to vent my feelings. Fortunately, I had the courage to attend my first ever Democratic Caucus where I was called on to speak to an unexpected crowd of over 200 people. I gave a full-throated antiwar speech. I was shocked by my own words, but the fiery speech was rewarded with a round of applause from the attendees. Needless to say, my life changed dramatically as I realized women can speak with a loud voice, politics can be remedy for change, and women do not have to follow what the societal norms have decided. Becoming more political has its rewards and disappointments, but I truly enjoy every aspect of political involvement today.

4. Living in North Carolina for thirty years:

Living in a totally different culture than the one you were born into I consider the most effective way to develop people skills and make you more sensitive to a variety of life values held by all people. For me, it was a chance to get to know the Black Culture, which growing up in Ely and living in white neighborhoods never gave me the opportunity to do. I lived in Durham, North Carolina, whose Black population was the majority of city residents. I met my first African Americans at the YMCA. That meeting developed into lifelong relationships as I became included in their social relationships and led me to join their church. Black women refer to each other as “sister” and soon I also became a “sister.” We worked together to establish a computer center in the church basement to serve the children who did not have access to computers in their homes. That effort eventually morphed into a major US. Department of Commerce grant that worked closely with a nearby traditionally Black University (North Carolina Central University) to hire a full staff to assist in the learning and computer needs of the surrounding neighborhood. Working together taught me their values of spirituality, humility, love in togetherness, just to name a few.

This best describes who I am today. There are many other events in my life that I best not exclude. They are: I am a mother now of three very adult sons (David, Joseph and Daniel Krall) and have a few degrees (BS in Nursing College of St. Catherine 1961, MS and PhD University of Minnesota, 1975 and 1986).

Have a wonderful day You'all.

Mary Louise



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.

