

## **2023-2024 Annual Report**

### **AAUW - Birmingham Branch**

#### **President's Report – Jean Ivory**

This was the third year for as Branch President. This year continued to be a rebuilding year due to vacancies on the board. We were able to fill the positions with some very competent and generous candidates. We were able to finish the year by offering a full slate of directors at the annual meeting for the 2024-2025 year. The branch was represented at the Regional Conference in St. Louis in October. Branch members were available for a few volunteer opportunities with Big Family of Michigan, Bound Together, and Forgotten Harvest. Women continued to collect pillowcases for the BF of MI holiday wrapping and members generously contributed to the holiday gift sale for Bound Together Students.

Two scholarships were awarded to a Birmingham student and a Pontiac student. Two scholarships were awarded to two Bloomfield Hills students. (Last year there were no applicants for the scholarship, so it was decided to give a scholarship to the top two candidates this year.) Three scholarships were awarded to three students from Lawrence Tech, Walsh College, and Oakland Community College. Students may apply for a renewal of their scholarship if certain criteria have been met.

My responsibilities were to plan the board meetings and a brief presentation for the members each month before the luncheon speaker. I sent out an agenda for each meeting as well as minutes and financials from the previous month's meeting. I tried to attend as many extra meetings as I could for new members and committee meetings. The President also serves on the Branch Foundation Board which meets monthly. The annual fundraiser and scholarship committee are a large part of the discussions and activities. The President also attends the monthly meetings for the Southeast Consortium which consists of about fifteen branches in our local area from Rochester to Ann Arbor.

My goal for the next year is to continue increasing our efforts for STEAM activities for local schools and to increase attendance at our monthly meetings.

#### **Membership – Katie Wiese, V.P.**

Thanks to our members reaching out to potential members, the Birmingham Branch membership has increased by twenty members to 188 members. Our September meeting was "Each One, Bring One" where members were invited to bring a friend to learn about our branch. This resulted in half a dozen new members. In November, new members were invited to a Welcome Brunch with the Branch Executive Board. A good time was had by all. Members enjoy socializing in an informal manner, and several Member Mingles were held during the year. In addition, branch members have invited friends to the luncheons and

special interest groups. This has also resulted in new members. An updated membership directory was placed in a password protected area of the Birmingham Branch website. It is kept up to date with the most current membership information. As I am term limited, Cam Takach will take my position as membership Vice President. We are meeting with Sharon McKenna to help transition membership to Cam. Special thanks to Sharon McKenna, dues treasurer, for efficiently keeping the membership database up to date.

### **Vice President Programming – Kathleen Norton**

As Vice President of Programs, I arranged eight individuals to speak at six of our luncheon meetings and two of our winter Zoom meetings (October through May). Speakers Tim Hudson (Forgotten Harvest), Ruth Bergman and Katie Chaka Parks (Zekelman Holocaust Museum), Henry Feinberg (Oakland University Music Professor), Eddie Franklin and Karen Moore (Sanctum House), Stephanie Spaniola (Corewell Health), Rachel Frierson (Detroit Riverfront Conservancy), Pam Craig (Gilded Age & Murder of the Century) and concluding with Maria Daniel (Immigration in the U.S.).

All the speakers accepted honorariums. Seven accepted \$100 and one required \$225 (\$150 paid by AAUW Branch and \$75 paid by VP of Programs. In summary, AAUW Birmingham Branch will be spending a total of \$850 for the year for honorariums. It was decided to increase the budget for 2024-2025 to \$800.

### **Recording Secretary - Linda Barclay**

As Recording Secretary, Cindy Longway took meeting minutes to record Board activities and decisions. Following Board approval, she maintained those documents in files. When she resigned because of an out-of-state move, Sally Doty took over temporarily. In November 2023, Linda Barclay took over the position for the remainder of 2023-24.

### **Treasurer – Nancy O’Connor**

The Finance Committee met in October 2023 and considered the impact of national rolling membership renewal dates on branch budget reporting. Members can now be enrolled at any time during the year and membership is effective for 12 months from the date of joining AAUW. In the past the branch has had a membership deadline shared by all and has received funds in a more aggregated sum from national following a shared membership renewal deadline. Members who subsequently joined after January of the fiscal year had not seen membership renewals due until the following fiscal year under the former national AAUW policy. Nancy wondered if these changes could impact the budget line item of “dues” in branch budgets and has deleted the previous category of “pre-July” on the budget spreadsheet of branch financial activity and has begun the new fiscal year (2023-2024) at zero, with only those funds received or debited in the current fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023.

Also, this fiscal year the Finance Committee considered receiving funds electronically from members for branch luncheons/activities. Nancy investigated this with the credit union which houses both checking and savings accounts for the branch and was advised that the Michigan United Credit Union does not participate in electronic programs such as PayPal and minimally in Zelle- and does not advise customers of their use due to possible fraud. The branch can set up a Zelle account; however, members who use them would need to have their own Zelle accounts in order to transfer the funds to the branch checking account- and the branch checking account information would need to be shared. Currently the branch only sponsors six luncheons per year. This seemed like a small number of events to warrant a change in current practice.

year It was also noted that the AAUW Birmingham Branch Foundation (a 501C3 organization) currently accepts the Square for credit card donations to the foundation that qualify for tax deductions. Conversely, The AAUW Birmingham branch is a 501C4 organization and cannot receive donations that are tax deductible and typically collects funds only related to member activities such as luncheons. Finance Committee members concluded that there remain some barriers to implementing the request to move ahead with setting up electronic payments for luncheons at this time. A legal review of whether the Branch status of 501C4 qualifies the branch to claim the nonprofit status for branch activities such as member luncheons to receive the lower fees for these services may be warranted. One recommendation from the Finance Committee is that a survey be conducted of branch members relating to their interest in paying for the monthly luncheons electronically as compared to current practice. This has not been done and may be taken up again in the next fiscal year.

The proposed budget for 2024-2025 was approved by the Board in April 2024. A goal of trying to increase members donations (not tax deductible) to the branch via a 50/50 raffle at luncheons was offered as a suggestion to increase revenues to offset increased costs of the monthly luncheons. Branch revenues are declining and other ways to bolster assets need to be explored in fiscal 2024-2025.

### **Bylaws Chair – Lucy Benham**

In 2023 I began the revision of the chapter bylaws. I corresponded with Janice Van Gasse, the state Bylaws chair, to learn what revisions were required by National. She reviewed our current bylaws and made suggestions which I incorporated as applicable.

The revisions were reviewed by the Board. After Janice Van Gasse approved our final revised bylaws, I prepared a summary of the revisions and the final Bylaws to be presented for approval by the members at the April 2024 annual membership meeting.

The Bylaws were approved by the members.

### **Hospitality Committee – Christine Dagenais and Nancy O’Connor**

The Hospitality Co-chairs receive and deposit the receipts for the monthly luncheons. We also prepare name tags for each person who attends the monthly luncheons. The deadline for the luncheon is always the first Wednesday of the month, one week before the luncheon. We call the number of attendees to the venue on the first Friday of the month and sometimes increase that number on the following Monday. The luncheon receipts are deposited at the Credit Union in Birmingham where the Branch has an account, and the deposit ticket is turned over to the Branch treasurer.

There were no luncheons scheduled in January and February 2023. The March 8, 2023, luncheon was held at Forest Lake Country Club with thirty-six in attendance. The April 12, 2023, luncheon was held at Forest Lake Country Club with forty-two people in attendance. The October 2023, luncheon was held at Forest Lake Country Club with fifty-two in attendance. The November 8, 2023, luncheon was held at Forest Lake Country Club with sixty-three people in attendance. The December 13, 2023, a luncheon was held at The Iroquois Club with forty-nine in attendance. There were no luncheons scheduled in January and February 2024. The March 13, 2024, luncheon was held at the Iroquois Club with fifty-one in attendance. The April 10, 2024, a luncheon was held at Plum Hollow Gold Club with fifty-one in attendance.

Several guests have joined the branch at the luncheons and their numbers are included in the counts given in the preceding paragraph.

### **Public Policy – Sally Doty**

The Public Policy Committee meets monthly. This year we had a presentation by Ron Zimmerman of the MIVote organization on Ranked Voting that was presented on ZOOM. We also have formed a partnership with the League of Women Voters to monitor school board meetings of Oakland County based schools. We are preparing a spreadsheet to keep track of signs of book banning and other controversial programs presented. We have had discussions on the implications for the election regarding AI. Several members have attended meetings of the WON (Women’s Official Network).

We are looking forward to an engaging year in 2024 and 2025.

We also are encouraging our membership to subscribe to the “Two Minute Activist.” All members are welcome to attend our meetings.

### **AAUW Funds – Sally Doty**

As AAUW Funds Director I educated the membership through articles in the bulletin and by asking directly at luncheons and other branch functions for donations. I am pleased to say that we had a very generous donation.

Our branch members contributed either directly or from the collections taken in the Fall to AAUW Funds \$9,701,00, which averages out to \$53.00 per member. This was second only to AAUW Ann Arbor, who contributed through their book sale.

I thank our membership for their generous support.

### **Newsletter – Co-Chairs Patty Orlowski and Kathy Stasys**

As of spring 2023, the newsletter is produced using Canva, a program that allows people to work jointly. Patty, the lead editor, formats the monthly articles, calendars, and photos. Kathy edits and proofs the written information. Members contribute pieces about the various AAUW activities or provide information about current issues concerning the Birmingham Branch. Any contributions to the newsletter must be submitted by the middle of the month so that the formatting and editing can be completed in a timely manner. Sharing the process of publishing the newsletter has been a successful adventure.

### **International Relations-Linda Schnorbus**

The International Relations group has been studying the country of India: its history, religions, economics, government, politics and education. These topics cover the positive and negative effects these systems have on India's international relations.

AAUW continues its alliances with international organizations such as the United Nations and the Women First International Fund working for positive change for women.

### **Study and Interest groups - Linda Kevorkian**

My duties include selecting hostess and selling raffle tickets at the monthly luncheons. My main responsibility is keeping in contact with Study and Interest Groups. The highlight of this duty is Each One Bring One. Sharon, Kathy, and I encourage each chair to attend and attract new and old members to their Study and Interest Groups. I think a change this year will unify the whole membership and encourage them to discuss the positives and ways we can improve. This is a big event and requires planning of food, design of venue, and final set of tables and signs.