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# FALLS NOTES



AAUW-River Falls, WI

## Branch Newsletter

## NOVEMBER 2017

**Next meeting will be DECEMBER 12**

We will gather for our **Regular Meeting and Holiday Gathering – Auction Fund Raiser– at 6:30 at Suzanne Hagen’s house, 2464 Golf View Dr. Bring items for the auction and appetizers or cookies to share.**

Contributions for the auction can be homemade goodies, knickknacks, samples of your art creativity etc. --the sale of which provides funds for branch travel. See you then.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**November 28** - we will celebrate AAUW’s 136th birthday! Each one of AAUW’s birthdays marks another year of advocacy and activism on behalf of women and girls everywhere.

**January 13, 2018 (Saturday) - STEM Award luncheon – Noon** – Women in Science at Juniors Restaurant, 414 S Main St, River Falls.

Guest speaker is Heidi Meilke Popelka, a graduate of UW Madison with degrees in chemistry and chemical engineering. Her work experience has included and internship with a major petroleum company, General Mills and is currently working for EcoLabs. Heidi is married to a River Falls HS graduate, Mike Popelka and is the mother of two children, Jordy and Aubrey.

**February 13** - Regular Meeting: Speaker, Jay Mattchet - Director, Our Neighbors' Place

**March 13** - Regular Meeting: Jamie Benson – District Facility Needs

**April 10** – Regular Meeting: Deeper in Debt – Cheryl Maplethorpe and Equal Pay Day

**April 20-21** - 2018 WI State Convention in Milwaukee

**April 21** – 2018 STEM Conference – Girls in SCIENCE event at UWRF

**May 8** – Annual Meeting - installation of new officers and year end wrap-up

## PRESIDENT' S COLUMN

Lorraine Davis, Branch President

Yolanda Dewar sent me a very interesting but disturbing article from November 17, 2017 CNNMoney by Lydia DePilis about the status Wisconsin Teachers. (This column has been greatly influenced by its information.)

Since 2011 when the Wisconsin legislature gutted collective bargaining for public sector and unions, teachers have seen lower pay, reduced pensions, lessening benefits and higher turnovers as educators move from one district to another. Some data suggest that as a result students have performed slightly worse especially in low performing schools. Other data suggest graduation rates and AP tests are moving upward.

Less ambiguous is the fact that median salaries have fallen, the exit rate for teachers in the state is 8.8% up from 6.4%, and the experience rate of teachers is decreasing. Teachers are moving out of state (as seen in this area) or out of the field altogether. Particularly hard hit are rural areas.

For those of us who have spent our lives in education, this is unsettling. When these events happened in 2011, we hoped for the best but expected the worst. Our expectations seem to have been met. Adding to this political reality is the fact that experienced teachers are sharing cynicism that education may not be a good vocational choice. The net result is that many good students no longer see teaching as a preferable career option.

This article has broad implications for AAUW as we work to advance equity and quality in the public schools. We need to think about how we can reverse these trends, validate teaching as a profession, and keep ourselves vigilant in our support of education.

Many of our Branch members contribute a great deal to our community. If you know of any members who have been recognized for their achievements, let Magdalena Pala ([magdalena.e.pala@uwrf.edu](mailto:magdalena.e.pala@uwrf.edu)), our secretary, know and she will send a letter of congratulations on behalf of AAUW. Let's celebrate one another.

## CARDS FOR SALE



We have reissued notecards recreating the pen and ink drawings of past member, Helen B. Walker.

The new cards are of two of Helen Wyman's flower prints and are packaged in groups of eight.

They are available from Suzanne Hagen for \$10.00.

A great gift!!!! A great support for AAUW efforts!!!!

## Deadline for the AAUW Writing Contest for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade is December 4.

Chairperson Jean Johnson

The contest is publicized in the Community Education Bulletin, at St. Bridget's, and Meyer Middle School.

Students research and write a paper about a woman who has made a contribution in math, science, or technology.

Member committee members are Sue Danielson, Sue Koosman, and Jean Johnson. Cheryl Maplethorpe created the web page link for Community Education. Lorraine Davis secured our contact (Gary Campbell, guidance counselor) at Meyer Middle School.

## NCWWSL Scholarship

Plans are in the works to send out information to University Students for the 2018 NCWWSL (National Conference for College Women Student Leaders) which will be held May 30 to June 2 at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland. Our Branch provides a \$1,000 scholarship to a sophomore or junior woman student at UWRF to enable her to attend. Michelle Stage was last year's recipient.

Melanie Ayers, Chair of the Women and Gender Equity Studies at University of Wisconsin –River Falls, is helping in providing information to students and faculty. Materials will be distributed in the middle of December and will be due January 29 so our recipient can be considered by the state for additional funding on February 1<sup>st</sup>.

In the past, we have found out that the best way to attract qualified candidates is through personal contacts. **SO if you know a student who fulfills the qualifications, please personally inform them of this wonderful opportunity.** The application is attached to the newsletter or can be found on our website.

## Facebook

New member, Krista Cleary has set up a Facebook page for our branch. Think about the most effective way this can be used to promote our branch. Thank you, Krista.

**River Falls AAUW has a new Facebook Page:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/AAUW-River-Falls-WI-Branch-232384647299972/>**

**Please go to the page and “LIKE” it so you will receive all event postings.**

## Girls in Science Program

The Girls in Science Program will be held on April 21, 2018 with an amazing hands on STEM ( Science, Technology, Engineer and Mathematics) experiences. We need your help! We will need people to be involved in registration, gourmet chefs (not so much) to provide a hearty lunch for our presenters—wonderfully appreciative college students and professors—and connections to anyone who can provide for the attendants’ swag- bags.

Good news is that we have received two grants to help fund the program.

## MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Ann Gustafson, Vice-President Membership

### WELCOME A NEW MEMBER

AAUW-River Falls is delighted to welcome **Paula Lugar** as a new member. After having joined as a national member this fall, she has expanded her membership to include State and Branch membership.

Paula graduated in 1974 from Indiana University School of Medicine with a BS in Occupational Therapy. In 1993 she completed her Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) at Hamline University in MN, a program that she describes as having been a life changing program for her.

Paula lives near Spring Valley where she has become active in the community. In November 2016, she successfully worked on a campaign to get the referendum saying "corporations are not people and money is not speech" on the Village of Spring Valley ballot. Since 2011, when she retired from a school district in MN, she has participated in the creation of Spring Valley Seniors Staying Put (SVSSP) where she is currently a board member. She has collaborated

with another SVSSP volunteer to start the first Memory Cafe in Pierce County. In addition, she also serves on the Western Wisconsin RiseUp steering committee, the Pierce County ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center) governing board and the St. Croix County Citizen Review Panel. In January, she is launching a business that will support community members who are experiencing dementia or life limiting chronic health conditions and their families by offering coaching and education services. Her business will also include advocacy and consulting. She is committed to bringing people together to vote for the candidates that will represent us, their constituents, rather than their funding sources.

Please join me in a warm welcome to Paula.

### **BRING A GUEST OR POTENTIAL MEMBER TO THE DECEMBER GATHERING**

December is an ideal time to introduce AAUW-River Falls to new and potential members. Following a brief business meeting we will begin our "Holiday Auction." This is the time when we auction off items or services, generally made by members that are brought to be sold. The money earned is used by the branch to provide for travel expenses for members to attend state and national conferences/conventions. Our auctioneers assure that everyone will have a good time. Members are also encouraged to bring six (6) holiday treats to share with those attending the program. **Hope to see you and your guests on December 12.**

### **POLITICAL POLICY**

Barb Peterson, Chair

As many of you know Sheila Harsdorf has resigned as senator from our district and the governor has called for a primary election on December 19, 2019. The general election is January 26, 2018.

So far the River Falls Journal (11/16) said that 2 Republicans have announced their candidacy (Assembly Member Shannon Zimmerman & Assembly Member Adam Jarchow of Balsam Lake) and one Democrat (St. Croix County Medical Examiner Patty Schachtner). Since then another candidate has filed as a Democrat, Reuben Helge Herfindahl. Unless someone else filed by November 21, those would be the candidates for the primary election December 19.

The branch is investigating the possibility of having candidate's forum. Because of the time crunch and complications arising from the possibility that the City of River Falls may be giving up its Public Access Cable channel, our involvement in the forum is uncertain. We'll keep you posted.

### **Details on Proposed Tax Bill**

If you are listening to the daily news you already know that tax reform is a current issue. But the details are daunting and quite confusing. The House and Senate are passing different bills and the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) will need to find a compromise. As I write this, the Senate bill is changing in order to garner additional Republican votes. Our own Senator Ron Johnson has said he won't vote for the tax bill because it will place a burden on small business in Wisconsin. It is likely to pass out of the Senate Budget Committee and be voted on by the full Senate before you read this. Then it goes to the JCT.

Here are a few details:

- 1.) The House has passed a bill with four tax brackets and the Senate proposes seven brackets. Compromise likely needed.
- 2.) Both houses will double the standard deduction to about \$12,000 for individuals and \$24,000 for couples. This will drastically reduce the number of people who opt to itemize their deductions, since the only reason to do so is if your individual deductions combined exceed the standard deduction amount.
- 3.) Both houses will eliminate the \$4,050 personal exemption for each member of your family.
- 4.) The child tax credit will increase from \$1,000/child today to \$1,650 in the Senate bill and \$1,600 in the House bill.
- 5.) State and Local tax deductions – the thorniest issue. Currently we deduct our state and local income, sales and property taxes. The House bill limits the deduction to just property taxes and caps it at \$10,000. The Senate plan eliminates these deductions entirely but there is backlash from high tax states who want their deductions.
- 6.) Mortgage interest deduction – Republicans in the House capped the deduction for mortgage interest debt at \$500,000, down from the current cap of \$1 million. The Senate Republicans have decided to leave this deduction alone which makes real estate lobbyists happy.
- 7.) Cutting corporate tax rates – The current rate is 35% and would be cut to 20%. The House version makes that cut immediate; the Senate imposes a one-year delay. Be advised that no corporation pays 35% tax after deductions and won't now pay 20% after deductions.
- 8.) Small business treatment – 95% of small businesses are not incorporated. They are called “pass-through” entities because their income is taxed via their owners' individual tax returns, instead of through corporate taxes. The House and Senate are treating small business tax differently and will face compromise.
- 9.) “America First” tax code – Republicans have prioritized making the U.S. tax system more competitive so companies invest here and do not have an incentive to shift profits to lower-tax jurisdictions OUS. Again, the House and Senate plans do not agree on how to do that so it will need to be worked out.
- 10.) Adoption, education and health – The House initially eliminated a tax credit for adoptions but later restored it. They also repeal deductions for medical expenses and counts tuition waivers that are widely used by graduate students as taxable income. Senate Republicans preserved the adoption tax credit and maintained the deduction for medical expenses and provided “education relief” for graduate students. Not sure what that means.
- 11.) To repeal or not repeal the estate tax – Often called the “death tax”, repeal will be costly. This tax tends to hit the very wealthy and their heirs. The House doubled the amount of inherited wealth that is exempt from the tax to \$11 million, from \$5.5 million and they phase out the tax in 2025. In the Senate, the exemption is also doubled, but the death tax never dies. Note: If you qualify for this tax, please don't forget AAUW in your will!
- 12.) Health Care – The Senate Republican tax bill eliminates the requirement that almost all Americans purchase health insurance or pay a penalty. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has calculated that health insurance premiums would rise if this bill becomes law, leading 4 million Americans to lose health insurance by 2019 and 13 million to lose insurance by 2027.

The CBO report shows that the GOP tax bill hurts the poor more than originally thought. Many of the people who are likely to drop health insurance have low or moderate incomes. If they drop health insurance, they will no longer receive some tax credits and subsidies from the government. Though many lower income families do not pay taxes, they do receive tax credits for reporting their income.

And finally, though conservatives have complained for years about deficit spending, this tax reform will add \$1.4 trillion to the deficit over the next decade.

I encourage you to keep abreast of this issue. I am seeking information from multiple sources including tv and newspapers online. For this report, I used **The Washington Post**, **CNN Money**, **The New York Times**, the **Milwaukee Journal Sentinel** and **Associated Press**.

## LET CONGRESS KNOW

If you listen to the news regularly you know that political actions can change quite rapidly. Some think legislators pass bills quickly before the public gets wind of their actions. It's hard to know how to be heard in Washington and Madison. Let's try to make it easier for you to express your opinion prior to their voting on bills. AAUW has the perfect solution for you:

On your computer or cell phone, go on the internet to the website [<aauw.org>](http://aauw.org)

On that website Home page you will find "Issues" at the top of the page. Click on it.

On my cell phone I needed to click on "Menu", then on "Issues". Each cell phone displays the pages a bit different so you may need to scan the page to advance to the Issues page.

On the Issues page you will see a list on the left side. Click on "Take Action".

The Take Action page rotates on five current actions that you can take. But first, let's get you signed up for notices. Scroll down to "Become a Two-Minute Activist". Enter your email address so AAUW can send you urgent notices of actions needed on legislation. Click on "Sign Up" following your email address entry.

Now you are on the **Two-Minute Activist** page and can fill in your information. I suggest you put a check next to "Washington Update Newsletter". It is a concise newsletter telling you federal policy news. Click on "Submit".

Now back up < one page to "Take Action". You can choose from the five actions currently. Health care is the urgent issue. You should "Take Action" and CALL SENATORS TOO!!

You may have noticed that AAUW is dealing with federal policies. There are often local policies that you may want to voice an opinion on. I suggest that you use the following websites to stay current on WI politics.

[madison.com](http://madison.com) - articles from **The Cap Times** and **Wisconsin State Journal**

[jsonline.com](http://jsonline.com) - articles from the **Milwaukee Journal Sentinel**

[wiseeye.org](http://wiseeye.org) - watch or listen to hearings, speeches, or news in review from around the state

I will also try to keep you informed. Please remember that timing is important so take action quickly so you are heard. Your involvement in political action is important!



## Thank you for TAKING ACTION.

This link below is to a fine discussion by Matt Rothschild, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign in Madison. It's a fast read and very informative.

<http://www.wisdc.org/op091817.php>

## INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Yolanda Dewar, Chair

### Global Entrepreneurship Summit – Reuters

Ivanka Trump (Kushner) was in Hyderabad, India for the “Global Entrepreneurship Summit” (GES) an event conceived by former President Obama. Ivanka pitched for better ties between the United States and India by saying “We share common priorities, including promoting economic growth and reform and fighting terrorism and expanding security operations.”

This year WOMEN are the theme of the gathering, held in previous years in the United States and Turkey. More than half of the participants will be women and all-female celebrations will represent several countries including Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. “I am in GES 2017 to be a global Celebration that elevates the importance of empowering and investing in women entrepreneurs” said, Ivanka.

### GWJ kicks off Centenary (1919-2019) Activities with the Centenary Logo Design Contest (Calling all artists!!)

GWJ (Formerly International University Women) is launching its *Centenary Logo Design Contest*. In 2019 GWJ will celebrate 100 years of advocating for girls and peace through education. Ahead of the General Assembly and conference to be held in August in Geneva, GWJ National Federations and Associations (NFAs) and Independent Members are invited to create an illustration that celebrates GWJ's century-long legacy of university women peacebuilding through education. The logo should encompass the entrant's vision of GWJ's mission that promotes the advancement of girls and women in all forms of public and private life through education. Artwork can be submitted from 1 November 2017 through 31 March 2018. Winners will be notified in April 2018. For official rules and entry form, click [here](#). We encourage participation and we look forward to seeing many creative submissions. Happy designing!

### Bleak New Data Show Just How Long Women Will Be Waiting For Equal Pay

Women will have to wait more than two centuries — 217 years — to have the same job and wage opportunities as men around the world, new data suggests.

The annual **Global Gender Gap Report** from the World Economic Forum, published recently, makes for more bleak reading to accompany the sexual abuse and harassment scandals plaguing numerous industries and governments.



The survey of 144 countries finds that as a whole, gender equality has worsened globally for the first time since WEF first produced its index in 2006. While income levels are rising, women are not sharing equally in the benefits, even in the most affluent countries.

“There seems to be a slowdown in momentum when it comes to proactive measures being taken to address gender gaps, particularly in the workplace,” said Vesselina Stefanova Ratcheva, an economist at WEF.

The index measures how opportunities and participation differ for men and women across four key areas: health, education, economy and politics. The most challenging gaps are in economy and politics, according to the report.

The U.S. saw its ranking drop from 45th last year to 49th this year, mostly due to a lack of women in U.S. politics. Men hold nearly 81 percent of the seats in Congress and make up the majority of mayors and governors.

The top 10 countries for gender equality are predominantly European, with four northern European nations in the top five. Iceland is in the top position for the ninth year in a row, followed by Norway and Finland.

But it’s not just European countries that scored highly; the top 10 also included Rwanda and Nicaragua. These economies are “putting in place more gender-equal opportunities regardless of their level of economic development,” said Stefanova Ratcheva.

None of the big powerhouse economies of the G-20 made it into the top 10, “showing that economic power is not necessarily a recipe for better equality between the sexes,” according to WEF.

However, gender equality does appear to promote better economic performance, according to numerous studies. A McKinsey Global Institute analysis estimated that more equality between the sexes would boost the global economy by \$28 trillion. For the U.S. in particular, the WEF index cites a study that economic parity could add \$1.7 trillion to the country’s GDP.

Despair shouldn’t be the main takeaway from the index, WEF insisted. “It is important to note that while the global picture is bleak in 2017, there have been some clear signs of progress in the past decade,” said Stefanova Ratcheva.

The gender gap in education could be closed within the next 13 years, says WEF. And there are some standout countries that have made rapid improvements — including Canada, which climbed 19 places for women’s progress in politics and wages.

“What is needed is new energy and commitment at the leader level — in business as well as political leadership — to put these into effect,” said Stefanova Ratcheva.

As Paul Polman, CEO of consumer goods giant Unilever, wrote for HuffPost, “It is our moral responsibility as today’s leaders ... to further advance the lives of women and girls everywhere, and reverse the widening gap.”

**The STEM Paradox: Why Are Muslim-Majority Countries Producing So Many Female Engineers?** By Elizabeth Weingarten, *Better Life Lab* is a partnership of *Slate* and *New America*.

In March, inside a small room at Tunisia’s National Engineering School of Tunis, six women listened, eyes wet, as one played an old song on her iPhone. The Arabic tune was a lullaby from a popular 1950s TV show that mothers had sung to their baby girls. The lyrics envision a future in which the little girl starts school and earns excellent grades:

“And I will say ‘My girl has grown up, she will be an engineer’ Oh people, oh people! I love her! She’s her mother’s lovely girl.”

For the Tunisian women—faculty members at the school—the song was a reminder of their childhoods. For the Americans, it was a reminder that they were in the right place. They had come to dig into an emergent and counter-intuitive pattern of data: There are, in many cases, a larger proportion of women studying and pursuing STEM careers inside developing, Muslim-majority countries than in the U.S.—and in some countries, those numbers are rising further.

For Americans, the vision of a 1950s mother crooning such a lullaby to her daughter probably sounds anomalous. Back then, most women were neither encouraged nor permitted to work in a masculine career like engineering. And today, they are still underrepresented in STEM careers overall and in engineering specifically: Only 18.4 percent of bachelor’s degrees in engineering go to women, and women make up between 8 and 34 percent of the engineering workforce, depending on the subfield. A couple of years ago the researchers began to wonder: What could Americans learn about our approach to this enduring disparity by looking outside of our borders?

“The West has invested billions of dollars to address the issue of gender inequality in engineering and computing and has basically failed,” explains Washington State University adjunct associate engineering professor Ashley Ater Kranov, the investigator who came up with the initial research. “I started thinking maybe we’re asking the wrong questions—questions that won’t help us solve the problem.”

While the most male-dominated engineering programs were in developed countries like the U.S., Indonesia boasted 48 percent female engineers.

Ater Kranov, along with Jennifer DeBoer, an assistant professor of engineering education at Purdue University, recently came back from conducting research in Tunisia, Malaysia, and Jordan, all countries that they chose to study based on counterintuitive research that two other academics, Maria Charles and Karen Bradley, published in 2009 and then in a subsequent article in 2011. Charles and Bradley, professors at the University of California at Santa Barbara and Western Washington University, respectively, had found that the STEM gender gap was smaller in countries like Iran, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, and Oman than in the U.S.—in other words, men still made up the majority of STEM graduates overall, but there were more women by comparison. They even found a reverse gender gap in those same nations when it came to certain STEM measurements—for instance, women in Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Uzbekistan earned more than 50 percent of the total number of science degrees. On the flip side, the Netherlands was the weakest country for women’s representation in science. A similar pattern held true for engineering: While the most male-dominated engineering programs were in developed countries like Japan, Switzerland, Germany, and the U.S., Indonesia boasted 48 percent female engineers.

Charles and other academic partners continued the research by asking eighth-graders around the world about their career aspirations. Once again, they found the same pattern: The more developed and affluent the country, the fewer female students said they wanted jobs in STEM when they grew up and that they liked math and science. This meant that the STEM gender gap contrast couldn’t be fully explained by economic decision-making—women (rationally) choosing more lucrative career paths in financially unstable environments. Separate from economic concerns, career preferences, too, were also divided along gender lines, inside developing, Muslim-majority countries than in the U.S.—and in some countries, those numbers are rising further.

In the imaginations of citizens of developed countries, “curricular and career choices become more than practical economic decisions ... they also represent acts of identity construction and self-affirmation,” wrote Charles in *Con-*

*texts* magazine in 2011. But as Charles puts it, “occupational aspirations are social products, not intrinsic properties of individuals.”

In the U.S., that claim could almost be seen as heretical. Here, individualism and individual choice are the precious gems in the crown of American values. “The idea that our sense of self could be formed by something that’s outside of our control is countercultural and threatening,” says Erin Cech, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Michigan who worked with Charles on the paper assessing the career aspirations of eighth-graders.

And yet the theory that career aspirations are at least partly socially constructed is corroborated by research into aspirational variation around the world and over time. (Women, don’t forget, were the first computer programmers in the 1960s and ’70s and were overrepresented among physics, astronomy, chemistry, and other science courses in 19<sup>th</sup>-century American schools.) But the more a career path is associated with one’s identity, as it is in many developed nations, the more it can also be tied in with existing gender stereotypes.

Or so the theory goes. For her part, Charles acknowledges that “the question of how societal affluence might promote gendered career aspirations remains open.”

The truth is that occupational patterns result from a complex interplay of both culture and biology—nature and nurture. Except for when they’re more straightforward. For instance, in Tunisia and Jordan, all students take a national exam after high school regardless of socio-economic status, and depending on their scores, they are funneled into particular career tracks. “The majority of women didn’t choose their professions; it was the scores that chose for them,” Ater Kranov explains. Top scorers are admitted to medical school, second-tier scorers are admitted to engineering schools, and third-tier are law students.

“A large percentage of girls aren’t driven by passion for engineering but by performance,” says Raja Ghozi, a Tunisian engineering professor at the National Engineering School of Tunis who has also studied in the U.S. Though Tunisian women can change their field of study to the humanities, they tend to stick with engineering because it’s something that’s been encouraged by their parents—often their fathers, Ghozi says—and because they know they’re more likely to find jobs in engineering in a country with a 15 percent unemployment rate. These women, she says, are taught to “complete the mission. Quitting or changing career direction for them is a failure, at least when they embark on their engineering education.” In many ways, that’s a virtue. But as a professor, Ghozi says she sees the dark side of this system in women who are burned out and unmotivated by the content of the work: “I think many of the girls could have been happier by allowing themselves to change careers, but the Tunisian engineering education system may not be that flexible.” (For what it’s worth, American society has its own flexibility problems: Elizabeth Garbee recently argued for eliminating the STEM pipeline metaphor in the U.S. because it perpetuates the idea that the only valuable scientists are the ones with Ph.D.s who have followed a restrictive educational path.)

Charles cites Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development research showing that limiting curricular choice in high school can result in more women in science and tech fields and a smaller influence of peers on aspiration. She acknowledges that this suggestion may strike some as “anti-democratic” but that those who are worried about undermining freedom of choice need to balance that concern against the possibility that girls’ and boys’ free choice isn’t really free at all but rather “constrained by taken-for-granted assumptions and cognitive biases about what they will like and what they are good at and by the social sanctions that they may anticipate should they elect to pursue gender-atypical educational and career paths.”

Though it will be months before DeBoer, Ater Kranov, and the rest of the team will be able to synthesize potential solutions from their research, there’s at least one emergent lesson for the U.S.: Passion for the field is important,

but assuming that passion flows from biology or that it's somehow innate ignores the ways in which culture and policy can reinforce girls' STEM capabilities early on and encourage passion to develop.

We may think we're rooting gender inequality out of our systems and institutions by targeting formal restrictions and overt discrimination, but it can still exist in covert ways. Often times, "equality is defined in formal procedural terms - as equal opportunities to realize preferences, which are understood to be properties of individuals" and therefore sacrosanct, Charles wrote me in an email. If a woman pursues a career as a teacher, she's unlikely to see this choice as one of forced conformity to gender norms but rather think her aspirations reflect a unique mix of interest and ability. "This emotional buy-in is where gender segregation gets its staying power," Charles says.

Though this may sound like a bleak assessment, it's actually a freeing realization: Say you've always thought you were destined—or designed—for a particular career. That's a powerful narrative and one that's reinforced by the media we consume and the people we talk to about their supposed career trajectories. But this narrative can also be powerfully constraining—especially if you experience failure or crises of confidence, which most of us will or already do. If we let go of the idea that our preferences, aspirations, and capabilities are completely self-determined, perhaps we'll truly experience a freedom of choice that has so far eluded us.

## **GWI launches 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign Toolkit**

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Campaign is an annual movement aiming to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls around the world. Beginning with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November and concluding with Human Rights Day on 10 December, the 16 Days of Activism Campaign unites the voices of millions of women and girls to raise awareness about GBV, works to eliminate all forms of GBV, and demands equal protection and full access to fundamental human rights of safety and education. This year, the theme, "*Together We Can End GBV in Education!*", directly relates to GWI's core mission, promotion the right to quality and safe lifelong education for girls and women at all levels; the advancement of the status of girls and women; and the ability of women and girls to apply their knowledge and skills in leadership and decision-making in all forms of public and private life. The 2016 global campaign involved more than 700 organizations in some 92 countries under the theme of From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All. GWI aims to build on the energy and momentum of last year's 16 Days of Activism Campaign, and has created a toolkit for National and Federal Associations (NFAs) offering resources to raise awareness about GBV and work towards its elimination.

## **Movie Highlighting Women's Right to Vote in Switzerland.** (Minneapolis Star and Tribune)

The movie "*The Divine Order*" may surprise some people to discover that Switzerland's equivalent of our 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment giving women the right to vote didn't pass until 1971. This movie examines that fight for women's suffrage in a microcosm.

## **What I learned during my Japan Trip-(among other things) Yolanda Dewar**

November 3<sup>rd</sup> is Japan's "Culture Day". On this day, all children (boys and girls) ages 100 days, 3, 5, 7 years of age wear their loveliest Kimonos and visit temples and shrines to thank the Shinto Gods and/or Buda for these children to celebrate their 'birthdays'. This is a tradition from ancient times when children seldom reached these ages. When wearing their flip flops as part of their Kimono wearing, girls are trained to walk "pigeon toed", as a sign of beauty. (c. f. China women feet binding, no longer practiced nowadays). This, and the custom of sitting on tatami

floors on their heels with feet turning inwards causes women to have misshaped legs. We noticed several older women (50-60 having difficulty walking because of legs shaped like circles!!! Our guide said these women were probably from far away villages. Notwithstanding, she said women to date, like her (Japanese born and raised in South Africa and Toronto!), may show a slight propensity to 'slightly curved' leg bones.

## FINANCE REPORT

Suzanne Hagen, Finance Chair

### AAUW-River Falls Finance Report October 31, 2017

<b>Checking balance 9/30/2017</b>	<b>\$ 2547.93</b>
<b>Receipts:</b>	
Notecard sales	120.00
AAUW dues	151.00
AAUW dues	182.50
Healthy communities returned share	44.18
Book sale	422.00
" "	297.00
" "	152.00
" "	369.00
" "	178.00
" "	774.00*
(*includes \$60 in additional note card sales & \$50 in change return)	
<b>Total receipts (10/1/17-10/31/17)</b>	<b>2689.68</b>
<b>Disbursements:</b>	
AAUW Natl dues	147.00
" "	24.50
" "	88.00
AAUW-WI dues	39.00
" "	13.00
" "	6.50
Returned deposit Healthy Comm.	44.18
Service charge on above	10.00
<b>Total disbursements (10/1/17-10/31/17))</b>	<b>372.18</b>

### Balances 10/31/2017

Checking: 4865.43  
Savings: 1658.20

\$ 6533.63

**Encumbered funds:**

Scholarship fund balance = \$3063.77 (reflects balance of \$981.77 + 2017 book sale profit of \$2082)

LAF = 12.00

Travel

State = \$0 (State balance added to national travel fund at end of fiscal year)

National = \$500.38

Total encumbered funds: \$3576.15

General operating funds: \$1289.28

## **Moose Brunch Report**

Thanks to everyone who sold tickets for the Nov. 12 Moose brunch and special thanks to those who worked that day: Lorraine Davis, Jane Matthews, Elizabeth Williams, Kay Montgomery, Cheryl Maplethorpe, Christine Meunich, & Sue Danielson. Our profit was \$389, a helpful addition to our operating budget. (The coordinator at the Moose Lodge noted that walk-in ticket sales were down somewhat from the two prior years, perhaps due to some other competing community events that day.)

## **BRANCH MEETING MINUTES**

Maureen Olle-LaJoie and Magdalena Pala, Co-Secretaries

AAUW River Falls Branch Meeting - November 14, 2017

The meeting was held in the River Falls Public Library.

Lorraine Davis called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

Two guests were introduced: returning member Diane Crist and Chantel Flegler, Coordinator for Diversity, Inclusion & Student-Athlete Success at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF).

The October branch meeting minutes were accepted as printed in the October newsletter.

The September treasurer's report that was printed in the October newsletter were approved. Suzanne Hagen presented the October treasurer's report. The profit from the book sale is \$2020, with an additional \$60 from notecard sales. The estimated profit from the Moose Lodge breakfast is \$450. The October treasurer's report was approved as presented.

AAUW River Falls Branch membership directories are available for pickup. Helen Bryant Wyman notecards are also available for sale.

Lorraine thanked Book Sale Chair Jane Matthews and all the volunteers for their work on the AAUW Book Sale. Left over books were donated to Goodwill.

AAUW Wisconsin District 4 is conducting a survey to determine branch needs.

The following board positions are open: Membership Co-Chair, Communication Chair, and Fundraising Chair. We are also looking for someone interested in Treasurer so they can train with Suzanne this year. Anyone interested in any of these positions should contact Lorraine.

The meeting on April 10 will be on student loans. University Representative Melanie Ayres reserved space at UWRF. This is an opportunity to get an AAUW group started at UWRF. Beck Hite and Valerie Malzacher may also be able to help recruitment of students.

The branch discussed Shelia Harsdorf's resignation as Wisconsin State Senator for District 10. There will be special election for the vacant seat with a primary in December and general election on January 16<sup>th</sup>. The branch does not feel there is enough time to get a candidate forum for the primary.

Paula Luger is a new member. Former member Mary Pryzina is turning 90 on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Her family is having a card shower during the month of December. Please send cards to 10101 West Palmaras Drive #309, Sun City, AZ 85373. Heidi Popelko will be the speaker at the STEM Lunch on January 13<sup>th</sup> at Juniors Restaurant.

The STEM Conference, Girls in SCIENCE at UWRF, will be held on Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>.

December 10<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the middle school science essay contest. Information about the contest has been distributed to Meyer Middle School and St. Bridget School. Please share this information with other middle schools and homeschoolers. Melanie Ayres is working with the branch on redoing the NCWSSL scholarship. The state deadline for this scholarship is February 1<sup>st</sup>. Recruitment will be done mostly by word of mouth.

The bylaws/policy guidelines were sent in the October mailing. The branch thanked Lorraine and Jane Matthews for all of their work on reviewing and revising the bylaws and policy guidelines. The revised documents were approved as distributed. Lorraine suggested honoring a local non-AAUW woman for women's history month. Elaine Baumann will organize this effort. Faye Perkins volunteered to help with the review process.

The Forward Foundation is holding a holiday concert on Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at the River Falls High School. Performers include Debbie O'Keefe, Tim Patrick, and Colleen Raye. More details can be found at [www.forwardrf.org](http://www.forwardrf.org)

The Phipps Center for the Arts has an current exhibit, In This Place: What Makes a Place Holy?, that focuses on the lands of the Qur'an, the Torah, and the Bible, from ancient times to the present, and on the multiplicity of ways people experience these places as holy. The exhibit ends November 25<sup>th</sup>. If people are interested, the branch could arrange a docent-led tour of this exhibit.

The URCA Fall Gala for undergraduate research, scholarly, and creative activity is being held on Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> from 5pm to 7:30pm in the Riverview Ballroom of the University Center.

The meeting adjourned at 7:02pm.

John Suzukida spoke about his family's experiences in American Japanese internment camps during World War II. Next meeting: December 12, 2018 at the 2464 Golf View Drive, River Falls. The branch will host their annual live auction and Christmas social.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Maureen Olle-LaJoie, Co-Secretary.



## **River Falls Branch: 2017-18 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Monthly meetings are usually the second Tuesday of each month September to May with business meetings at 6:30 and programs open to the public at 7:00 at the River Falls Public Library. Exceptions are noted.

**September 6** – City Sampler at UWRF, 11-1 pm

**September 9** – Coffee and Scones New Prospective Membership Event: 9:30-11, Riverwalk Deli

**September 12** - Regular Meeting: COMMUNITY ROOM at the First National Bank, 104 E Locust Street, 6:00 Pot Luck Salad Dinner, our business meeting at 6:30 PM, program presentation at 7:00 by Michelle Stage, our NCCWSL delegate.

**Early September** – Book donation barrels placed in Family Fresh and Dick's Grocery store.

**October 7** - Sorting of book donations, 9-noon, Riverwalk, Main Street level

**October 10** – Regular Meeting: Speaker, Dr. Cynthia Kernahan - Implicit Bias

**October 12** - BOOK SALE at River Walk, October 12nd through the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>

**November 12** – Moose Lodge Breakfast Fund raiser

**November 14** - Regular Meeting: Speaker, John Suzukida - American Japanese Internment during WWII.

**December 4** – Deadline for Middle School Science Essay contest

**December 12** - Regular Meeting and Holiday Gathering – Auction Fund Raiser– Suzanne Hagen's house, 2464 Golf View Dr. Bring an appetizer or cookies to share.

**January 13, 2018 (Saturday)** - STEM Award luncheon – Noon – Women in Science at Juniors.

Guest speaker is Heidi Meilke Popelka, a graduate of UW Madison with degrees in chemistry and chemical engineering. He work experience has included and internship with a major petroleum company, General Mills and is currently working for EcoLabs. Heidi is married to a River Falls HS graduate, Mike Popelka and is the mother of two children, Jordy and Aubrey.

**February 13** - Regular Meeting: Speaker, Jay Mattchet - Director, Our Neighbors' Place

**March 13** - Regular Meeting: Jamie Benson – District Facility Needs

**April 10** – Regular Meeting: Deeper in Debt – Cheryl Maplethorpe and **Equal Pay Day**

**April 20-21** - 2018 WI State Convention in Milwaukee

**April 21** – 2018 STEM Conference – Girls in SCIENCE event at UWRF

**May 8** – Annual Meeting - installation of new officers and year end wrap-up



### **AAUW's MISSION STATEMENT**

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

### **AAUW's VALUE PROMISE**

By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance. AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.