



NORTHWOODS NEWS

Ely Minnesota Branch Newsletter

February, 2009

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

Vision: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

Message from Teresa Sagen, Branch President

The beginning of a new year is a good time to look at previous goals, revise them, and set new ones. Just as goals are important for us individually, setting goals and planning are important for us as an organization. We will begin the process of formulating a 3-year strategic plan at noon on Thursday, February 12 at the Grand Ely Lodge. This plan will guide our decisions about future programming, how we spend our money, and our community involvement. I urge all members to participate. Everyone's ideas are important, especially those with an interest in where this organization is headed in the next three years, and those with an understanding of where the organization has been. If you are unable to join us, please contact a Board member, and tell her your ideas. We will be meeting over lunch, so it will not be all work and no play.

February Meeting

What: Immigrant Women on the Iron Range by Pam Brunfelt,
History and Political Science Dept, Vermilion Community College

When: Tuesday, February 10, 7:00 PM

Where: U.S. Forest Service Kawishiwi Ranger Station

Don't miss this program! Pam is a very engaging and knowledgeable speaker.

Citizen Media and Online Engagement Webinar

E-Democracy has invited AAUW members to participate in a Webinar on Thursday, February 5 at 2:00 PM. Funding for this Webinar is provided by a grant from the Blandin Foundation, and is being offered at no cost to residents of Greater Minnesota. For more information, go to www.e-democracy.org. Look on the lower right corner of the page and click on the middle of the three choices (Citizens Media). To register, send an e-mail to team@e-democracy.org, with "Webinar RSVP" in the subject line. You will receive call-in/login information.

The registration deadline is February 2.

AAUW's Work on Pay Equity Pays Off

You probably are already aware that the United States Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. AAUW has actively supported this legislation, and AAUW's Executive Director, Linda Hallman, attended the signing ceremony at the White House. For pictures and more information, go to www.AAUW.org. Ledbetter worked at the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, receiving top performance awards for nearly two decades. After she retired, she became aware that she had been paid significantly less than male co-workers with the same job. She filed suit under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and was awarded back pay and damages. In 2007 the U.S. Supreme Court reversed this decision, because she should have filed the suit when the discrimination actually took place, even though she did not know about the unequal pay until later.

AAUW has also been working hard for the passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act, which was passed by the House of Representatives. AAUW looks forward to its passage in the Senate.

National Membership Campaigns Underway

AAUW's strength is a large and growing membership base. Capitol Hill listens to AAUW because AAUW collectively advocates on behalf of its members for equity for all women and girls. Because membership is so vital for our mission, AAUW is promoting two national membership campaigns: Shape the Future Membership Campaign and phase 2 of the Member-Get-A-Member Campaign. In addition, a new member can join AAUW between January 1st and March 15th, and pay only half a year's dues. Support AAUW by inviting a potential member to a branch meeting. For more information, talk to Darlene Nemanich, Vice President Membership.

Herbergers' Community Day

Would you believe it's time for the spring Community Day at Herbergers? If you do not already have your coupon books, look for them to arrive by mail. We need volunteers to sell coupon books at Herbergers on our pre-sale day, Monday, February 16th from 10-12 AM. Please call Lora DeWeese if you can help. Remember, this is an important fundraising project for us, allowing us to contribute to the Legal Advocacy Fund, the Education Foundation, and to our community.

Students at Vermilion Community College

We are forming a new committee for the purpose of exploring ways the Ely branch of AAUW can support female students at VCC. Caroline Owens has volunteered to serve on this committee, and is looking for additional members. Please let her know if you are interested.

Three Year Strategic Plan

All members are invited to a strategic planning session on Thursday, February 12, at noon at the Grand Ely Lodge. (See the Message from the President.) We will complete our strategic plan, and submit it to AAUW Minnesota with our application for the annual branch award program, Mission in Motion.

Nominating Committee Looking for Candidates

The Nominating Committee will be presenting a slate of officers at the March meeting. They are looking to fill two year terms for the following positions: Vice President Membership, Vice President Program, and Secretary. If you are interested in serving in any of these positions, please contact Cindy Park.

AAUW Ely Branch “Piece of History”

The program at our January meeting was a presentation by Gordon Sheddy, City Councilman and Chairman of the Ely Sanitation Committee, about the state of recycling in Ely. Did you know that the Ely Branch of AAUW began operating a recycling center in Ely in 1971? The idea began to take shape in 1969 as a result of an AAUW study topic, “This Beleaguered Earth, Can Man Survive?” A committee was formed, a recycling building was located with assistance from the City Council, a means of transporting the materials to Duluth was found, and the center was up and running in November, 1971. There must have been a lot of pent up demand, because the Recycling Committee reported that month that they were swamped! At an AAUW Environmental Conference in Chicago the following month, the Ely Branch was cited as an example of community involvement.

The recycling center operated for nearly four years, despite the many challenges, such as finding transportation to Duluth, scheduling people to operate the center, vandalism, finding people to load trucks, heating the center, the need for outside lighting, locating a bottle crusher and keeping it repaired, installing a floor in the center, and a broken door. One solution for the manpower shortage was initiated in January, 1973. The Teen Club helped at the Recycling Center every Wednesday after school, in exchange for AAUW members chaperoning an after-school program on Mondays and Thursdays at the High School gym. The need for the recycling effort to at least break even was an important issue for the committee. In May, 1973, the committee reported that during the year, 17 tons of tin and glass were shipped, and there are 17 more tons ready to be shipped. In December, 1973 the committee reported that the volume of recycled materials had more than doubled during the past 6 months. In early 1974, the committee began looking for another entity to takeover the recycling effort. In May, 1975, the Recycling Center was closed due to high transportation costs and the lack of a market for recycled materials.

Thank you to Katherine Scheuer for doing the research for this article. She read through past minute books, and documented the history of the Recycling Center.