



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The holiday season is here!

Raise a hand if you are done with holiday shopping.
I am not. Raise a hand if you ate a month's worth of calories on

Thanksgiving.
Don't judge-- those calories don't count!

We are almost half way through the 2021-2022 term. We have had amazing speakers so far. Thank you to Melody, our Program VP for the November speaker, Colonel Michelle Hannah. Using Zoom allowed Colonel Hannah, who is on duty in New Mexico to join us along with a surprise guest, Colonel Anne Knable. They shared their experiences in the military and discussed traditional opportunities for women in the military, emerging opportunities and challenges unique to women in the military. Colonel Hannah also touched on Operation Allies Welcome, which is helping Afghan refugees who were instrumental in assisting US forces in Afghanistan to resettle in the United States.

Thank you to Shirley Carpenter for providing us with an update on how we can support Sherman Elementary as a branch! Please review the information she provided found further in this newsletter.

On Saturday, December 18, 2021, 10:30am – 12:00pm, we will be hosting our virtual Red Candle Tea to welcome new members to our branch! If you have RSVP'd to attend, you will be receiving a special gift bag this coming week! During this interactive event, there will be fun activities to participate in and a chance to win one of several "door" prizes! We will also discuss the future of our organization and ways we can be more active in the community even during COVID. Please Call Alex Picavet at 531-222-4176 ASAP if you still want to attend and have not yet RSVP'd!



I wish you all a festive holiday season and a happy new year!

Martina Clarke

**WANTED: AAUW Omaha
Membership VP**

Pay: Terrible. None.

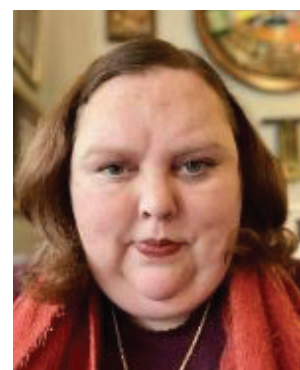
Hours: Evenings/weekends, but not many hours.

Benefits: Priceless! Including: leading and mentoring other women, lifelong friendships, community influence, being a leading voice for women and girls in Nebraska AND continuing the tradition of AAUW Omaha that has been active since 1907!

Please review your strengths and explore your talents. When you are ready to courageously step up and volunteer for one of our open positions, please email: Omaha-ne@aauw.net. Also contact us if you have questions or are unsure of what position would suit you best.

MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBER: KATIE LEDOUX

Katie and her husband have lived in Omaha for 3 years. They moved here from Washington DC where she worked for the Smithsonian Art Museum and Portrait Gallery before opening her own consulting business, Sunflower Grant Writers. As a professional grant writer, Katie helps nonprofit organizations all over Omaha reach their potential and grow by helping them secure grants.



She has almost 20 years of experience working in the nonprofit world, and has helped to fund a range of projects including arts programs for kids and city development. She named her business Sunflower Grant Writers because she loves sunflowers for their resilience and wants to be that for the organizations she works for. She said, "when sunflowers cannot find the sun they face each other. So when businesses or nonprofits cannot find support they can face me and I can help them find that support and reach that next level."

Katie grew up in St. Louis, Missouri and graduated with a degree in Art History and Public Policy. She says she is a passionate collector of art - mostly paintings and photos- and often develops relationships with the artists. She has already joined the AAUW art history group.

About Omaha, Katie said she and her husband, now retired from the military, chose Omaha as the place they want to settle down and they love having a house and a yard. She looks forward to meeting with AAUW in person in the coming year.

Please help us welcome Katie during our Red Candle Tea event on Saturday, December 18 from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR AAUW-OMAHA?

At a recent special Board meeting, the leadership of our Branch of AAUW asked several important questions that we would like to discuss with all of you.

- What is our purpose and mission as AAUW-Omaha?
- How can we be of service to the Omaha community?
- What do we offer our active members to continue to keep them involved in AAUW-Omaha?
- How can we grow and sustain our membership?

We discussed what our local mission is and how/if we are achieving it.

AAUW Omaha provides an opportunity to serve women and girls pursuing higher education in Omaha and beyond, through:

- 1. providing support and community for our members with aligning passions.*
- 2. leveraging university education and experience to promote, support, and energize this effort.*

AAUW Omaha provides the connections and support needed to make a difference in woman's' lives.

What do you think? Are we following our Mission? Are we achieving our goals? This will be the topic of an upcoming discussion, and we would like for you to participate. Please let us know if you will at omaha-ne@aauw.net.

MEET THE AAUW OMAHA BOARD MEMBERS

Melody Mundell Vice President for Programming



Hello,

I am Melody Mundell, Vice President for programming in this Omaha branch of AAUW. This is my month to introduce myself and tell you more about who is serving on the board this year and next.

I have lived in Omaha for almost exactly four years, moving here in January of 2018 from Erie, Colorado. I was born in Denver and lived in Colorado all my life until deciding to retire and relocate to Omaha, where my brother has lived for 47 years. Over those years, I visited Omaha many times and thought I would enjoy living here in the same city as my only sibling.

In Colorado, I owned a 14-acre horse farm and operated an equine boarding, training and instructional facility. I taught mostly private lessons to children and adults, took students to horse shows, and traveled extensively to teach, lecture, and judge horse shows around the United States. I initially planned to become a university professor like my brother, completed my university degrees, and spent four years as a T.A. in the English Department at the University of Colorado. The job market did not cooperate with my career plans, but I remained in the teaching profession for most of my life. Following my children through their school years, I worked as a pre-school music director, directed dramatic productions in elementary and junior high school programs, and taught high school English classes, all while developing my business, running the farm, and raising those children.

I am glad to be out of the equestrian business and living a slower, physically easier life in retirement. I continue to teach water aerobics two days a week at the Sarpy YWCA, something I also did in Colorado. I belong to the AAUW evening book discussion group and stay in virtual touch with my Colorado book group of 30+ years. I love being outside and enjoy working in my much smaller "city" vegetable and flower gardens and in the yard, adding to the landscape each year. I traded a 100 year old farmhouse for a 97 year old house here in the Happy Hollow/Dundee neighborhood, and there is always something to work on. Literature, history, architecture, southwestern art and interior design are other interests.

A friend of my brother introduced me to the AAUW group here in Omaha, and I joined in 2018. I hoped to meet people with similar interests and to find ways to serve my community. I joined members in Read Across America at Sherman Elementary school the one year we were able to do that before COVID closed things down and hope to do so again.

In addition, I believe that now is the time to look around us and identify other areas where AAUW Omaha can make a difference for young girls in our community. One idea might be to use some of our funds to develop a scholarship program for young girls in public school who are showing academic promise and an interest in pursuing a university education. The board welcomes your ideas for ways to carry out our mission statement.

MEETING DATES/TIMES

We are continuing to meet via Zoom for the foreseeable future. We recently took a poll to see if Saturdays continue to be the best time to hold our regular meetings. Much of the feedback we heard asked us to be more flexible so that people who do not have Saturdays free can also participate in meetings. We are continuing to test that by holding meetings when the speakers are most available, however, **we would like to see more participation if possible.** If you have an opinion, we will discuss this toward the end of the Red Candle Tea event on Saturday, or you may still take the poll on the electronic Ivy newsletters emailed to you.

MEETINGS AND PROGRAMMING FOR 2021-2022

Zoom continues to be the primary way to meet this year.

As we continue respond to the pandemic we are weighing ways to keep the meetings and presenters accessible and safe. We learned many new skills over the last year- shout out to everyone who has learned how to use Zoom! While we understand that the last year of virtual meetings has been hard, and we miss seeing each other in person, out of an abundance of caution we will continue to meet using Zoom while we explore ways to getting back together for social events this year.

For folks who feel comfortable getting together, we suggest small groups gather to attend the virtual meetings together (with tech-savvy hosts). These groups can form their own "pod" and participate together in the larger Zoom meetings like some book groups have already been doing this year.

Meeting Calendar:

General membership meetings in September, October, November, December (Red Candle Tea), February, March, April* and May.



December

Saturday, December 18, 2021

The Red Candle Tea will be held to welcome our newest members and celebrate the holiday season together. Though we are not yet meeting in person, much like last year's fun Zoom event, we have planned interactive activities, a craft, quiz, a bag full of treats and door prizes to keep it lively. You may have received a reminder call from Alex Picavet who is assembling the gift bags for everyone who has registered to attend. Please call her directly at 531-222-4176, to RSVP if you would like to attend but have not yet registered.

January

Generally, there is not a January membership meeting, however, the Board would like to invite you to an informal, informational meeting to discuss AAUW Omaha's budget, which will be presented during the General Membership meeting in February for approval. This gives members a chance to weigh in on how funding is allocated in the branch and we can discuss the long-term management of the finances.

February

General Membership Meeting- Date and Time TBD

February is Black history month. We hope to confirm LaVonya Goodwin, community columnist for the World Herald, to speak at this meeting. Her most recent column in the OWH was Friday Oct 15th, on redlining in North Omaha.

March

General Membership Meeting- Date and Time TBD

We are working to confirm Caroline Padilla, executive director of The Intercultural Senior Center in Omaha as our speaker. She was recently honored as one of 50 high-achieving Nebraskans age 50 and older by The Bloc, a philanthropic non-profit based in Lincoln.

April

General Membership Meeting in lieu of State Conference - Date and Time TBD

May

General Membership Meeting- Date and Time TBD

Potential Future Presentations:

Plan Like a Ranger: AAUW Member Alex Picavet has offered to present about how to plan your next trip to a national park sometime this spring. She has been a ranger with the National Park Service for over 30 years and worked across the nation in a variety of parks and leadership roles.

Katina Talley- owner of Sweet Magnolias Bake Shop. Growing up in a foodcentric household in rural Nebraska, Katina learned to cook and bake alongside her mother, father, and grandmother. Her passion for culinary exploration continued to grow as she pursued a degree in Food Science & Technology at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and intensified as she began her career as a Food Scientist in the ConAgra Foods bakery lab. Subsequently, Katina developed products for popular brands such as Marie Callenders, Hunts Tomatoes, and Peter Pan Peanut Butter, but ultimately found a road back to her true passion - baking.

If you have ideas for speakers, activities or social gatherings and would like to be part of the discussion, please contact us at omaha-ne@aauw.net.

AAUW-Omaha and Sherman School

Read Across America may return in person in the spring! Possibly Feb. 28 or Mar 1 or 2. Would anyone be willing to go in person to share a book? There are 12 classrooms. We could also do it remotely if AAUW readers have a camera on their computer. It is not done with Zoom, but with the method that O.P.S. uses. Each room has a big screen that they can project the reader on or each student could watch via their iPad. Anyone interested in participating **please call Shirley Carpenter ASAP** at (402)-331-4076 or email her at saucarpen38@gmail.com.

We could become **pen-pals with the students** if there is interest. This would be an excellent way to interact with the students remotely while helping them build their writing and reading skills.

Career Day program where members spend 20-30 minutes sharing about their careers with 4th and 5th graders, likely in late April or early May. It is possible that it can be in person or remote.

There are a couple of other opportunities the Board is discussing that will be presented during our upcoming General Meetings, so please try to attend!

INTEREST GROUPS

EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION - details below

DETECTIVE FICTION - details below

ART APPRECIATION - details below

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON BOOK CLUB - details below

CREATIVE WRITING - details below

DINE- planning to start once it is safer to do so



Evening Book Discussions 2021-2022

Date	Book/Discussion Leader	Hostess *
January	No meeting in January – happy new year!	
February 3	My Omaha Obsession: Searching for the City by Miss Cassette Discussion led by Carol Ebdon	UNO Community Engagement Ctr Carol/Esther
March 3	The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson Discussion led by Esther Scarpello	Betsy McDaniel
April 7	Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi Discussion led by Clare Baylor	Melody Mundell Dessert-Esther
May 5	The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane by Lisa See Discussion led by Jane Young Planning for 2022-2023	Bev Johnson Dessert-Jane

Our monthly book discussion will meet at the home of the hostess, who will call members to remind them of the meeting and provide dessert.

Easter will be on April 17, 2022 – so there won't be a conflict with the April book group meeting. For the 2021-2022 year, we will be reading an eclectic mix of books from a variety of authors and genres.

Meetings start at 7:00 p.m the first Thursday of the month (online via Zoom)



2021-22 AAUW Detective Fiction

Date	Book/Discussion Leader	Discussion led by:
December 21	Discussion led by Denise Arnold. MURDER BY AN ARISTOCRAT by Mignon G. Eberhart. This is a classic mystery but has been republished and is available.	Denise Arnold
January	No meeting in January – happy new year!	
February 15	Denise Arnold. WOLF KILL by Cary Griffith. A Sam Rivers Mystery. In this outdoors thriller, the investigation of a bizarre wolf attack leads to evidence of murder, conspiracy, and shocking family secrets.	
March 15	THE CONSEQUENCES OF FEAR by Jacqueline Winspear. It's 1941 and psychologist/ detective Maisie Dobbs is feeling burned out but just has to get involved when a young boy comes to her for help.	Kathleen Crawford-Rose
April 19		
May 17		

Meetings are held the **third Tuesday, 6:45 p.m.** at the UNO Community Engagement Center. Contact Kathleen Crawford-Rose, 402-292-8912, katcr@cox.net for information



Art Appreciation

The Art Appreciation group meets at **1PM on the third Wednesday of each month.** The group enjoys not only meeting in one's home but also enjoys venturing out to museums and galleries in the community. This month we enjoyed a guided tour of the Czech/Slovak Museum. Next month we will meet at the Joslyn Art Museum.

All members of AAUW are welcome to join us. Contact Kathi Rotella, kathirorella@gmail.com



AAUW Wednesday Book Club

Month	Title	Author	Leader
January 6	The Night Watchman	Lousie Erdrich	Marj Vandenack
February 2	The Little Old Lady who Broke All the Rules	Catherina Ingelman-Sunberg	Jean Circo
March 2	TBD		
April 6	TBD		Marj Vandenack
May 4	The Beekeeper of Aleppo	Christy Lefteri	Nitza Fairlie
June 1	The Beautiful Mystery: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel	Louise Penny	Sandra Squires
July 6 August 3	TBD		
September 7	TBD		
October 5	TBD		
November 2	TBD		
December 7	The Book of Lost Names	Kristin Harmel	Nitza Fairlie

First Wednesday, 1 p.m. Zoom until Further Notice. Please contact Sandra Squires at sksquires@cox.net to be added to the list or for the Zoom link.



Creative Writing Group

Meetings are held at 1 PM **on the third Monday of each month**. We are always looking for new members. Each of us reads to the group something we have written; possibly a poem, perhaps an experience we've had or might like to have, a piece of art, or a project that we might be working on for ourselves for church, for family. We enjoy each other's stories!

Currently, we are meeting using Zoom. We have met previously at Starbucks at 114th near Dodge and at Stories, across the street from Starbucks. We hope eventually to return to in-person meetings eventually. For more information or to join any of the meetings contact Marjorie Vandenack at 402-894-1673 or cell by at 402-658-6419, for the Zoom invitation.