

# South Haven, Michigan AAUW

## Newsletter: November 2023

### Breakfast Group



THE BREAKFAST CLUB  
A new AAUW SH Social  
Option

The second Tuesday of each  
month  
8:30 am

Dave's Landing

(05110 Blue Star) South Haven

COMPLETELY CASUAL

Come if you can for conversation and camaraderie.

No invitations

No RSVP's

No name tags

Hope to see you there and then

### Scholarships

Scholarship Committee members met this month to review developments in the AAUW SH Scholarship Program, and the Committee is happy to announce that AAUW SH will award thirteen scholarships in June 2024!

According to Committee Chair **Teresa Gibbons**, "We have enough money in the budget to provide our usual four scholarships: two Pathfinder awards and one Luminary award to SHHS seniors, and to support non-traditional students, we will award \$1500 to InterCare to help cover transportation expenses for the apprentices in the medical assistant program." In addition, thanks to a record-setting August book sale, an additional children's book sale in May, an internal fundraising campaign, and the Cogdal Winery benefit concert, nine Achievement Awards will be also given: all previous AAUW SH scholarship recipients will receive a \$1500 scholarship check for their next year of college, provided they have a minimum 2.7 GPA at the end of the 2024 Winter semester.

Teresa also informed Committee members that she spoke with Tiffany Greenman, daughter of long-time AAUW SH member **Barb Konrad**. Barb passed away earlier this month, and members will remember her as an active member who attended

and supported many AAUW events. In particular, Barb was a dedicated book sorter and worked as a cashier during many book sales. Tiffany said that her mom spoke often about AAUW, and about the Scholarship Program specifically. To honor Barb's dedication to our organization, her family designated the AAUW SH Scholarship Program as a preferred memorial. So far, enough money has been donated to fund one of our



existing scholarships in 2024 which will be named for Barb. If you would like to donate to this fund, please write *scholarship fund* in the memo of your check, and mail it to: AAUW SH PO Box 343 South Haven, MI 49090

Teresa also reported that SHHS seniors will soon begin applying for all South Haven area scholarships using the Common Application again this year. Since using this online tool, all of the local scholarship providers saw an increase in applicants. In addition to the Common App, AAUW South Haven's Scholarship Committee has continued to work on improving our scholarship program, and committee member **Pat Stephenson** is a key part of that. Pat is a financial aid expert, and she explained to Committee members how colleges are supposed to apply scholarships like ours to a student's financial aid. To ensure that our scholarship money goes directly to the student and is not used to off-set the college's financial aid package, Pat drafted a letter explaining exactly how our scholarship money can be used. This letter will be sent to all of our scholarship recipients and to the financial aid departments of the colleges they attend.

Lastly, Co-chairs **Sharon Gultinan and Jean Bevevino** have begun planning for the Spring Scholarship Celebration which will be held in early June. Stay tuned for more details!

# Membership

We currently have 130 paid members in the South Haven Affiliate of the American Association of University Women. Since the last New Member Event (NME) in 2022, we have had 15 people join. The overwhelming enthusiasm and positivity exhibited at this year's NME resulted in six new members joining that night. It was held at the Cogdal Vineyard, again this year.



It stopped raining 30 minutes before we arrived so we could all enjoy being outside. We heard from our Committee/Group Chairs who gave passionate descriptions about their group. The amount of energy generated that evening made me think that our group could conquer the world. Thank you to all of you who attended to help make this one of the highlights of this fall. Thank you to **Darlene Buresch-Zoellick, Marla Zwolen, Mary Ellen Doty, and Jan Blasing** for planning this event.

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## DEI

The DEI Committee will meet on Tuesday, November 28 at 5:00 pm at the South Haven Center for the Arts.

Did you know that October is LGBTQ+ History Month? Here is some information from the OutCenter of Southwest Michigan which is celebrating their 20th anniversary in October:

*LGBTQ+ history is so incredibly important. For generations queer people were forced to stay in the shadows, their identity left to the margins of their story. A significant portion of the work to reassemble LGBTQ+ history is attempting to decode subtext and understand implications. Even modern history is plagued by self-censoring, editorialization, and systemic attempts at erasure. So many queer stories have gone untold, from ancient history to the aids epidemic to now. That is why it is so important for us to celebrate, record, and protect LGBTQ+ history.*

# Public Policy

The 198 attendees who attended the AAUW-SH candidate forum listened to South Haven mayoral and ward candidates introduce themselves and answer questions on issues of public interest at Listiak Auditorium on September 28. The forum was organized by your Public Policy Committee and moderated by PPC co-chair **Pat Stephenson**. Our AAUW of South Haven has been sponsoring candidate forums for over forty years and PPC regards the forum as one of our primary responsibilities.



PPC also sent a Rapid Responder Alert to our membership regarding Michigan House Bills 4129 and 4130 introduced in our state legislature that make it a felony to intimidate a clerk or poll worker, or otherwise prevent them from performing their duties. If you haven't already contacted your state legislators to support these bills, please refer to your email of October 6 for their contact info.



## Message from the President

I seem to always begin with a weather report. Fall colors are starting to cover the trees and the nights are again getting chilly. Soon my husband and I leave for a brief color tour to Petoskey and back through Traverse City.

Lots has happened since the last newsletter. Our annual Fall Picnic – now fondly dubbed the Pillow Picnic as we help stock Sylvia's Place Domestic Violence shelter with pillows for incoming women – was held on September 19<sup>th</sup> at the American Legion. Attendance was good, food was delicious with vegetarian options included, and over 70 pillows were collected.

The Candidate Forum was back and in full swing September 28<sup>th</sup> at Listiak Auditorium. Among the two mayoral candidates and 6 ward candidates were two of our members – **Annie Brown** and **Mary Hosley**. Our Public Policy Committee organized a

professionally run forum. **Pat Stephenson** skillfully moderated the panel as each candidate was given equal time to answer questions from the audience. Topics covered included short term rentals, affordable housing, structure height limits, candidate residency in South Haven, recreational beach and water safety, and the ever-growing deer population. Attendance approached 200 and was a successful precursor to the upcoming 2024 National/State/Local elections.

Our social calendar continued with the annual New Member Event at Cogdal Winery. The weather looked grim with rain all day, but stopped in time for our celebrations with a sky full of beautiful October sun and autumn clouds. We had a great turnout including many new members and potential members who were able to learn about the many activities we offer. Thank you to **Jackie McAninch, Mary Ellen Doty, Darlene Buresch-Zoellick**, and all others who helped setting up and cleaning up a fun time. Thanks also to Cogdal Winery for again hosting us.

I will miss the Domestic Violence Prevention committee's luncheon and speaker, but I know it will be delicious and informative.

Some of you know that I have been struggling with finishing our by-laws. Each time I thought it was complete there would be a typo or an addition from National or AAUW MI. With everyone's help I finally completed and submitted them to State for final proofing and found out today that our bylaws (with our permission) are being used as the model for all the other Michigan affiliates. We have both incorporated the National mandated section as well drafting what was referred to as "very good (local affiliate) bylaws". They can be found on our website, which with the help of **Erika Morrison** continues to be updated. If there is something you want posted or revised on the website, let me know and I will forward to Erika. Check it out at <https://southhaven-mi.aauw.net/>

Our condolences go out to the family of **Barbara Konrad** (1939 – 2023) who passed away on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Her obituary can be found through Starks Family Funeral Homes. Tributes have been directed to South Haven AAUW and Al Van Humane Society. She will be missed.

# Pillow Picnic Recap

“Please bring a dish to pass and a pillow to our annual fall picnic. The pillows will be donated to Sylvia’s Place: a domestic violence shelter in Allegan.”

Ten years ago, we made this simple request of our members. Through the past decade you have continued to donate new pillows for the women and children of Sylvia’s Place at the annual fall picnic. It was a simple ask then, and remains so. The resulting kindness is a huge comfort at a moment when comfort is a rare commodity. Thank you.

This year, following our 2023 Fall Picnic, we delivered 92 pillows to the shelter. Their supply had dwindled, now the storage garage is bursting. Krista Bosman, the new house manager, was a bit amazed and completely appreciative. Sadly, the need keeps growing. She knows AAUW SH is happy to help.

Our established tradition of support for Sylvia’s Place, the work they do and the women they serve, is worth noting. Through the efforts of the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee (donated kitchen table, patio table and chairs, improved playroom equipment as well as improving the playground and outdoor areas) we have made a difference in the lives of the many women and families in residence. Through the generosity of our organization’s members’ (food baskets, personal care baskets, gas cards and PILLOWS), we have supported the complicated journey of countless domestic violence survivors, in a wide variety of practical ways.

Each year, the DVP committee asks, “What do you need?” We bring those answers to the committee and to our membership. Every time ... every year... you answer.

The vision statement of AAUW SH reads **WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS** and through your generosity we put our words into actions.

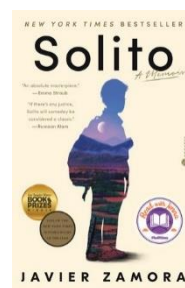
The September AAUW-SH Picnic was a HUGE success thanks to numerous members. 100 pillows were collected for Sylvia's Place, exceeding the number collected last year! Special recognition to **Sharon Gultinan** and **Kathy Dascenzo** for scheduling and **Darlene Buresch** for decorations and everyone who helped organize and most importantly showed up early to set up. The turnout

was absolutely fantastic! Thank you everyone who donated pillows!

With October being Domestic Violence (DV) Awareness month, we hosted two speakers for the October Lunch Bunch. We were thrilled with the number of women who attended! We learned how Melanie Hooker and our own **Robin McGinnis** network to help DV victims in Van Buren County. Melanie is the executive director of The Domestic Violence Coalition, and Robin is the clinical supervisor of the Cora Lamping Center (Berrien County). With Van Buren County not having a DV Shelter, Melanie networks with other organizations like The Cora Lamping Center to assist our Van Buren County DV victims. Their efforts are amazing. Although we heard of one tragedy, we heard of so many success stories and are thankful such dedicated women are helping DV victims in our county. On behalf of The Cora Lamping Center, **Robin McGinnis** thanks everyone who donated new twin sheet sets that were collected.

A HUGE Thank You to **Kathy Dascenzo** and **Sharon Gultinan** for their dedication and guidance as chairs with **Mary Hosley** for the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee of AAUW-SH. They are stepping down. We have the pleasure to welcome **Julie Molnar** who has graciously offered to co-chair the committee with Mary. We look forward to 2024.

## DEI Recommends



The DEI Committee would like to recommend *Solito*, by Javier Zamora. This is a memoir from a young poet who tells the unforgettable story of his harrowing migration from El Salvador to the United States at the age of nine. *A memoir as gripping as it is moving, Solito provides an immediate and intimate account not only of a treacherous and near-impossible journey but also of the miraculous kindness and love delivered at the most unexpected moments. Solito is Javier Zamora’s story, but it is also the story of millions of others who have had no choice but to leave home.*

# Book Groups

Monday Afternoon Group:

Nov 27 *The Light We Carry* by Michelle Obama

Hostess – **Lisa Rostar**

Wednesday Evening Book Group:

Nov 6 *The Girl With the Louding Voice* by Abi

Dare

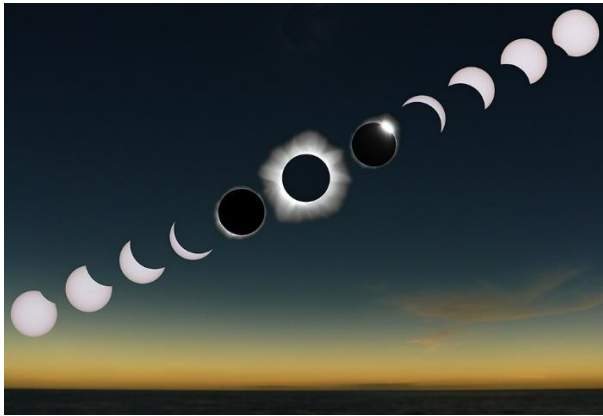
Hostess-**Sharon Gultinan**

Dec 13 *Hello Beautiful* by Ann Napolitano

Hostess - **Julie Molnar**

Of special interest regarding our October discussion of *American Eclipse* by David Baron, hostess **Julie Leavitt**, our own science guru, distributed glasses for viewing the annular eclipse on October 14. She made us all aware that there will be a total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024 and that the nearest place for us to experience it will be in Indianapolis.

**Sharon Gultinan** has already made arrangements to be there!



Thursday Night Book Group:

Nov 16 *The Lost Apothecary* by Sarah Penner

Hostess - **Marla Zwolan**

Jan 18 *Hang the Moon* by Jeannette Walls

Hostess - **Marge Lampe**

## To Do List ✓

- \_\_\_ Start a new Book Group.
- \_\_\_ Invite friends to AAUW events.
- \_\_\_ Organize a Lunch Bunch opportunity
- \_\_\_ Donate to the LMC pantry & school supply collection
- \_\_\_ Volunteer for Open Door
- \_\_\_ Stay in touch with your legislators
- \_\_\_ Plan a Teen Parent Dinner

# Golf



Our golf group held their annual inter-generational scramble with the South Haven High School girls' team. It was a beautiful day for golf. Thank you to **Nancy Kayse** and **Becky Vasko** for organizing the outing. The girls are talented and fun to play with.



## Social Opportunities

Think about and watch for Lunch Bunch opportunities as we enter the winter months. Also remember the new Breakfast Club meeting at Dave's Landing the second Monday of the month at 8:30 for you early birds. Just show up.

## On Your Calendar?

- Oct 31 Open Door
- Nov 6 Wednesday Night Book Group
- Nov 7 Teen Parent Dinner
- Nov 8 Breakfast Group - Dave's Landing
- Nov 15 School Board
- Nov 16 Thursday Night Book Group
- Nov 27 Afternoon Books
- Nov 28 DEI meeting 5-6pm at SHCA
- Dec 13 Breakfast Group – Dave's Landing
- Dec 13 Wednesday Books
- Dec 13 School Board