

South Haven, Michigan AAUW

Newsletter: September 2025

President's Message

Whew! It's been a hot one! I'm looking forward to winding down after a busy summer and the cooler temps the fall should bring.

AAUW SH had a busy Spring and our Summer events were amazingly successful, too. The Candidate Forum on July 15 was very much appreciated by the community and had about 250 attendees. An actual overflow crowd for the venue. Thanks to our PPC and headed by **Amy Nichols and Pat Stephenson**, with Moderator duties performed beautifully by **Mary Montgomery-Clifford**, the event went smoothly and civilly.

Our Annual Book Sale was also a hit. With a total of \$11,800 between sales and donations, I think it may have been the highest ever in revenue for us. And with the underwriting of Amy O'Sullivan and **Mary Pietenpol**, it was all profit! That being said, it was the heroic work of co-chairs **Edna Kent and Jean Bevevino** and a multitude of volunteers that made the book sale happen. It's a LOT of work and the Board is having discussions on how it could be altered a bit for next year.

Looking ahead, as you probably are aware, we have two major events: Sept 10 Pillow Picnic at the American Legion, and our New Member Event Sept 25th at Cogdal Vineyard. There will be electronic invites to those two events. The Domestic Violence Committee Lunch Bunch. This will be in October at Lakeside Entertainment, date TBD.

Another newsworthy item - **Paula Harer**, our Communications Director, is in the process of updating our website. This is a monumental task and we hope to have it completed by December and thereafter updated monthly. Thank you Paula, for taking on this project!

Once last thing - We have two of our members running for Mayor of the City of South Haven - Annie Brown (current mayor) and Mary Hosely (current Councilperson). I hope you have the opportunity to chat with both of them and get an idea of their takes on the issues facing the city and their ideas for the future. And be sure to vote!

See you in September!

~ **Judy Pollack**

Book Groups

Monday Afternoon Group

Sept 22 *Vintage Munro* by Alice Munro

Hostess: **Elaine Stephens**

Oct 27 *Master Slave Husband Wife* by Ilyon Woo

Hostess: **Liz Smith**



Wednesday Evening

Sept 10 *The Measure* by Nikki Erick

Hostess: **Sharon Guiltinan**

Oct 8 *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Hostess: **Lois Schwartz**

Wednesday 2.0

Deb D'Adamo debradadamo@gmail.com

Sept *Isola* by Allegra Goodman

Thursday Night Book Club

Sept 9 *Someone Else's Shoes* by Jojo Moyes

Hostess: Helene Dubin

A temporary alteration in the meeting night!

Oct 23 *The Book Club for Troublesome Women* by Marie Bostwick

Hostess: **Carol Kaim**

Book Sale

Major Kudos to **Edna Kent** and **Jean Bevevino** for organizing a most successful 2025 Book Sale! We made \$11,800 from sales and donations combined. It was a LOT of hard work, even with a record number of volunteers. Muscles were pulled, backs were strained, but you did it! It was exhausting but much appreciated by the community and the tourists. This is a huge undertaking and as we are getting older, it is getting more physically demanding. The good news is that everything went smoothly and it was a success.

Special thanks to **Teresa Gibbons**, who is our Scholarship Chair, and past Book Sale Chairs **Liz Smith** and **Susan Shields**

DEI Update

The DEI Committee is kicking off Autumn with some "Good Trouble" - a DEI Zoom Forum direct from AAUW-Hawaii. We're inviting everyone to attend if you'd like. No RSVPs needed - it's a big room with a nice projection screen!

In support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,

~Cheri Stein

DEI COMMITTEE MEETING

Zoom Forum with AAUW Hawaii

Tuesday, September 9, 2025 6:00-7:00 PM

SH Township Hall, 09761 Blue Star Hwy

(North of the bowling alley/Across from Rome's on the corner of M-140 and Blue Star)

New Member Event

Thursday, September 25, 2025

5:30

Cogdal Vineyards

7143 107th Avenue, South Haven

Let us gather to enjoy the coming of autumn and welcome our new members! Bring friends who may be interested in getting involved with AAUW South Haven. Please RSVP to your evite by September 15th, or contact **Merrily Brannigan** (mandm77@comcast.net). Looking forward to seeing everyone!



Dinner Group


We would like to invite any members who are interested in the AAUW Dinner Group to contact either **Debbie Mellein** (debbie.mellein@gmail.com) or **Sue Cunningham** (cunningham.5@nd.edu). There wasn't an opportunity to explain this program and we have a lot of new members, so we decided to introduce our group in the Newsletter.

We have four gatherings per season: the first Sunday in October, November, December and May. Four or five couples (spouse, partner or friend) are assigned to a group with one member as host who then assigns the other items on the menu.

This is a fun way to include spouses/friends for a nice evening with people you may not know for a social gathering. More information will be available to those interested. Inquire soon!

Save the Date

A lunch bunch will meet October 30th to commemorate Domestic Violence Awareness. More details coming.



2025 Issue Forums (Is DEI a Dirty Word?)

Moderator: Younghee Overly, AAUW Hawaii board, AAUW national public policy co-chair


Speakers:

- Andrea Freeman, Second Century Chair at Southwestern Law School and Professor at Richardson School of Law
- Elizabeth Fujiwara, Civil Rights and Employment Attorney in Hawai'i
- Avi Soifer, former Dean of Richardson School of Law

Learn about the impact of recent attacks on DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and potential ways YOU can get involved.

Email publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net if you have questions.

Tuesday September 9th NOON via Zoom (go to <https://tinyurl.com/hawaiiidei> OR use the QR code to register)



Golf



The AAUW-SH Golf Group tees off on Wednesdays at HawksHead Golf Club. Cost to play is \$40 for nine holes. If you are not already a part of this group but would like to play and need more information, please email **Becky**

Vasko (ravasko@iu.edu) with "Wednesday Golf" in the subject line.

Open Door

We cooked and served at Open Door on Tuesday July 29th. Our menu was chicken Caesar salad with pasta, berry medley, dinner rolls with butter, chocolate pudding, and snickerdoodle cookies. We prepared food for 80 guests. Thanks to all the AAUW helpers including cooks **Sharon Gultanin, Kathy Straits, Chris Flood, and Kellie Terry**. Our gracious servers included **Mary Pietenpol, Susan Shields, Sandy Olsen, and Jo Ann Flowers**.



Open Door Coordinator(s) Needed

For many, a hot meal is not a guarantee-it is a blessing. There are men, women and children in South Haven who go to bed hungry. The good news is that each of us can help provide that blessing through the community's Open Door program. Volunteering to cook and serve meals 4-5 times a year is one of the most impactful ways to make a difference in our community.

After eight years as Coordinator of the AAUW contribution to the program, **Peggy Murnighan** is stepping down and we need a new Coordinator or Coordinating Team. The duties are:

- Schedule Open Door dinners for the 5th Tuesday of each month (4-5 a year) at the First United Methodist Church, South Haven.
- Plan Menu
- Purchase food
- Schedule volunteer cooks and servers
- Cook menu along with volunteers
- Serve menu along with volunteers
- After meal cleanup (no dishwashing!) along with volunteers.

It looks like a lot, but Peggy assures that it is a small commitment with a high payback for community service. There are experienced AAUW members who will continue to serve as volunteers,

and new members are also welcome. Peggy will stay for the transition to coach and train.

When you step into a kitchen to help prepare food, you are not just dicing vegetable or stirring a pot-you are nourishing bodies and lifting spirits. A warm plate of food says, "You matter. You are cared for." That small act of kindness can bring hope to someone facing hard times.

If you are interested, please contact **Peggy Murnighan** at pmurnighan@gmail.com.

Membership

Please Welcome:

Elizabeth Zaluba

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BM & MA - Roosevelt University

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BA & MA Univ. North Carolin

M.Ed Aurora Univ

Public Policy Committee

The Candidate Forum held at LMC on July 15 was "Standing Room Only" and received rave reviews from the candidates running for Mayor and City Council as well as numerous attendees. Your PPC felt we had provided an important opportunity for voters to become acquainted with the candidates in order to make informed decisions when voting in the primary held August 5.

Moving forward, your PPC will grapple with what and how to proceed as the issues facing women, girls, and our families are numerous and make pinpointing priorities challenging.

Scholarships

AAUW SH has a long tradition of awarding scholarships to local young women, and in 2021, our Scholarship Program expanded to provide financial assistance beyond students' freshman year of college. This would not be possible without the support of our community and our members.

- Your donations at the Cogdal fundraising event and to member appeals headed by the Fundraising Committee help support the Scholarship Program.
- Some AAUW SH members have donated to the Scholarship Program anonymously, and recently, the Kitchin, Konrad and Kayse families have sponsored memorial scholarships honoring loved ones.
- In addition to these personal donations, the Book Sale remains the primary funding source for the Scholarship Program, and the hard work of our members contributed to another successful Sale this year.... whether you donated books, carried books, bought books, sorted books, organized books or waited on customers. Or, like Book Sale sponsors Mary Pientenpol and Amy O'Sullivan, perhaps you made a financial donation to the Book Sale in support of the Scholarship Program.
- Members of the Scholarship Committee give their time in support of women's education by assessing the Scholarship Program at the annual Committee meeting, interviewing applicants and selecting Scholarship recipients, or serving as Connections to our Scholarship recipients. As we celebrate the efforts of everyone who has supported the Scholarship Program, we can also celebrate the success of AAUW SH Scholarship recipient Jessica Arvizu whose experience highlights how your contributions benefit young women in our community.

Scholarship Committee members were first introduced to Jessica when reviewing her 2022 AAUW SH Scholarship Application:

In addition to working at Meijer and at Jellystone Park Campground, I enjoy helping with the Laundry Project, which is a service started by my mother. This project helps migrant and seasonal families pay for their laundry. I like helping others live a little easier. It's rewarding to know that instead of worrying about paying to do laundry, these families can use that money for other necessities."

During Jessica's scholarship interview, she explained that her parents were farm workers, and because Jessica is the oldest of five girls, she took care of her sisters in the morning and afternoon, including driving them to and from school each day. Despite her responsibilities at home, Jessica earned excellent grades in high school and received glowing references from her teachers. As a first-generation college student, Jessica received the 2022 Pathfinder Award and was accepted to Michigan State University.

In 2023, Jessica and her family attended the Spring Scholarship Celebration where she received her first Achievement Award. You may recall that she spoke about being on campus during the shooting that took place at MSU her freshman year. Jessica said that although that event was terrifying, it made her even more determined to graduate from college.

Throughout college, Jessica has been on the Dean's List every semester, thus qualifying for the \$1,500 Achievement Award her sophomore, junior and senior year, resulting in a total of \$6,000 in scholarships from AAUW SH. Jessica recently sent this update to share with our members:

I am writing to let you know that I will be completing my degree from Michigan State University a semester early and will graduate at the end of Fall Semester 2025.

I am currently interning at the Lansing Refugee Development Center, where I work with refugee children in grades K-12 to support their academic and social-emotional growth as they settle into America. This experience has deepened my passion for helping children succeed, particularly those facing unique barriers. Throughout the rest of this summer and fall semester, I will continue this work while completing my undergraduate degree. After graduating in December, I hope to work full-time while applying to Master of Social Work programs to begin the following semester. My goal is to become a school social worker, where I can advocate for students and create inclusive environments that help every child thrive! I want to thank the members of AAUW for your financial assistance throughout college. I greatly appreciate your support in helping me complete my education.

Pillow Picnic

Wednesday, September 10, 2025
5 to 7 p.m.

American Legion – 129 Michigan Ave.

Please bring a dish to share and a pillow or two for Sylvia's Place. Needed: a couple volunteers to make sloppy joes (it's very easy). If you missed the invite from Punchbowl, please reach out to **Mary Hosley** at mjhosley@live.com or give her a call/txt at 914-713-8649. Collecting pillows for Sylvia's Place like we have done before. Want to donate but can't attend? Mary will have a box on her covered porch starting Labor Day weekend. Drop off at your convenience: 726 N Shore Dr, South Haven. It's the house with wild growing wildflowers!



On Your Calendar?

Sept 8 Diaper Bank
Sept 9 Book Group (Thursday Group on Tuesday)
Sept 9 DEI Meeting
Sept 10 Wednesday Book Group
Sept 10 Pillow Picnic
Sept 22 Monday Afternoon Books
Sept 25 New Member Event
Sept 29 DEI Zoom with Hawaii AAUW
Oct 5 Dinner Group
Oct 6 Diaper Bank
Oct 23 Thursday Books
Oct 27 Monday Afternoon Books
Oct 30 DV Month Lunch

From the Archives



Pictured: Emily Fairbanks Talbot

1881, 15 women from 8 colleges met in Boston to create an organization of women college graduates. They hoped to assist women in finding greater opportunities to use their education, as well as promoting and assisting other women's college attendance. Thus, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae or ACA (*AAUW's predecessor organization*) was officially founded on January 14, 1882. The ACA also worked to improve standards of education for women so that men and women's higher education was more equal in scope and difficulty. At first, the ACA met only in Boston. However, as more women across the country became interested in its work, the Association saw that expansion into branches was desirable. Washington, D.C., was the first branch to be created in 1884, and New York, San Francisco, and Philadelphia branches followed in 1886.

To Do List ✓

- ☐ Read with a group
- ☐ Start a new book group
- ☐ Sign up for the Dinner Group
- ☐ Volunteer for Open Door
- ☐ Invite friends to AAUW events.
- ☐ RSVP to the New Member Gathering
- ☐ Donate some Diapers.
- ☐ Buy some pillows
- ☐ Call a legislator. Call again.
- ☐ Organize a Lunch Bunch opportunity
- ☐ Play golf