

September, 2023
Volume 73, Issue 1



ROCHESTER (MN)
BRANCH

HIGHLIGHTS

AAUW GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023

6:30 P.M. SOCIAL TIME

7:00 P.M. MEETING & PROGRAM

CHATEAU THEATRE

PEACE PLAZA

PROGRAM:

REVIVING A LOCAL TREASURE

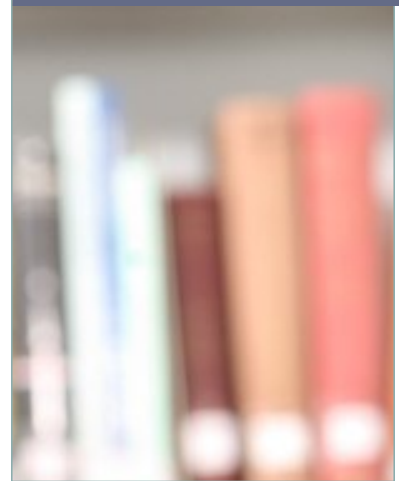
SPEAKER:

NAURA ANDERSON

MARYETTE BRAITHWAITE 507-993-4162

ROSEMARY BRADSHAW 507-226-3945

PROGRAM VICE PRESIDENTS



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MEMBERSHIP

For information, please contact

Kathy Lawrence

507-285-9331

or

Jo Trachy

507-269-0091



SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

About a year ago, Rochester City Council approved a three-year contract with Threshold Arts to run the Chateau Theatre's operations. Naura Anderson is the founding director of Threshold Arts, a local non-profit community arts organization committed to empower artists at all levels and contributing to vibrant and inclusive arts experiences in Rochester.

Naura and her team have been working in the background to identify partners who are willing to help with funding and staffing. Destination Medical Center gave Threshold Arts \$250,000 to help with renovations. As with any old structure, some of the renovations and upgrades have been more challenging than foreseen.

The beautiful architecture and unique design of the Chateau will be preserved with the renovations making the space easier for the public to enjoy. The plan is to make the building available for concerts, art shows, and an entertainment venue for private events such as weddings and receptions.

Please plan to join us on Wednesday, September 20 to see the changes and preservations at the Chateau.

~Maryette and Rosemary

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All branch members are invited to participate in any of the following groups. Please let the chair or discussion leader know in advance, if possible. Contact the chair, discussion leader, or host for additional meeting information.

BETWEEN THE LINES—TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5—1:00

Book: *Good Night, Irene* by Luis Urrea

Location: Starbucks across from Silverlake

Discussion Leader: Karen Krueger

Chair: Pat Espeset patespeset@gmail.com

READING PLUS—MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11—9:00 A.M.

Book: *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver

Leader: Joyce Wentz

Location: Zumbro Lutheran Church

Chairs: Ruth Stroebel 507-271-3240 ruthstroebel@yahoo.com, and Carol Hartley 916-712-8899 chartley@comcast.net

AFTERNOON READING--WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13—

Book: *The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles

Host: Laura Martin, 3928 Autumn Lake Ct SW

Discussion Leader: Laura Martin

Chair: Judy Auger (judy_auger@msn.com, 282-7922) and Laura Martin (martin.laura@mac.com 289-7895)

WORDS WORTH—WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13—1:30 PM

Book: *Mornings in Jenin* by Susan Abulhawa

Location: Homestead 1900 Ballington Blvd NW Apt 308

Discussion Leader: Nancy Kampmeier

Chair: Mary Ann Kleis makleis@aol.com

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY—THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28—1:00

Sara will lead the discussion of #3 "China and America: back to the future?" In person or Zoom TBD. Since by the time we meet the topic in the book will be almost a year old, please keep an eye out for news on China/US relations. Anyone who is interested but isn't on the Foreign Policy email list can email Sara at jeff.sara.staab@gmail.com for information about the meeting.

READING WITH A PURPOSE—THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28—7:00 PM

Book: *The Seed Keeper* by Diane Wilson

Host: Julie Caesar

Discussion Leader: Jo Trachy

Chair: Julie Caesar (288-9209; rstgardener@gmail.com)



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Barbara Knutsen

Welcome back to our branch meetings and programming for 2023-2024. Program Vice Presidents, Maryette Braithwaite and Rosemary Bradshaw have planned informative topics for our general meetings and dinner get-togethers. Our Interest Groups have challenging topics to be discussed, and I hope you will feel free to join any one of them if the topic piques your interest.

This year I would like all of you to consider how we can encourage new members and also think about the future of our branch and of AAUW in general. So far Rochester has been able to maintain our local membership at around 100+ each year, thanks to the efforts of our membership Vice Presidents. We have been fortunate to have faithful officers serve through the years, several of whom will be up for election this year including a candidate for president. I will be asking the board to look at our current structure and by-laws regarding officers.

In lieu of a national convention, a Central States Regional Conference October 19-21 will be held in St. Louis, MO. Gloria Blackwell, CEO of AAUW will be a keynote speaker, as well as Lisa Maatz, Public Policy and Organizational Consultant. Some topics to be discussed will be succession planning and leadership and AAUW and the future, reproductive rights and women's health, equity and inclusion, women's economic security and pay equity. Details can be found at aauw-mo.aauw.net.

I look forward to seeing you at the Chateau Theater in September.

Update from Membership Treasurer—Julie Gilkinson

Thank you to all of you who got your membership renewed by June 30th! We only had four come in this summer. We have lost 6 members, but we gained two. Welcome to Cheryl Davidson from Eyota and welcome back to Fran Field.

Congratulations to Linda Browne who has joined the Honorary Life ranks having been a member for 50 years.

Right now the total number of members is **101: 4 Life, 24 Honorary Life, and 73 regular.**

Keep talking up AAUW to your friends and acquaintances!

Yearbook

The deadline for corrections or additions to the Yearbook will be October 15th. Send updates to Kathy Lawrence at kathylawrence@charter.net

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Cheryl Davidson

mygmcleek@gmail.com



I was raised in Northern Indiana, a two-hour drive from Chicago, on a 40 acre farm in the middle of nowhere. We had a Winamac rural route address on a gravel road, party line phone, a huge garden, and went to school at North Judson. My favorite subjects were math and choir. I did some track but not much else due to lack of transportation. My younger brother still lives in the area and my older sister is retired in Texas.

During my first semester at Purdue University, I took my first computer class and changed from Math to a Computer Science

major. I also started working at computer center, back when the computer took up a whole floor of the building. The input was mainly punched cards and output was printed on large, noisy, impact printers, and distributed to the user's folder by staff. On some shifts I worked on the computer floor, mounting tapes and removeable hard drives (20" diameter, 6" high), and even some paper tape reels that were fed into older machines elsewhere on campus. I met my husband, an electrical engineering major there in the physics lab. .

Bill had his college funded by the Navy so he owed them the next six years as an officer. So off to San Diego California we went. I landed a job at Control Data small computers (desk size) with little effort as I already knew how to load their hard drives and tapes from college. Later I moved to a small research company as one of their five "computer advisors" who assisted researchers on their computer tasks.

After the Navy, we moved to the Twin Cities. Bill was hired for an electrical engineering job . Driving around investigating shopping choices, I saw a Control Data Sign, so I stopped in to investigate. It was the same small computer division that I worked for in CA which was moved to MN. They were happy to see me again, so another easy found job. We bought a house in Coon Rapids, both of us migrated to jobs at smaller companies, and my daughter Melissa joined the family.

Bill joined a very small company in Lake City and we built a house near the golf course in Wabasha. The partners in the small company disagreed on the direction the company should take and split. They tried to make leading edge PCs and failed as they could not compete with big PC companies. We got and grew the boring custom electronics part as Davidson & Associates, Inc. in 1990. Our second daughter Lauren was born. I bowled in women's league and went to a few state tournaments. I participated in Wabasha community band as last chair clarinet. I also got involved with Girl Scouts (troop leader, service unit manager, cookie manager) and Wabasha-Kellogg school (Math Wizards coach and sewing theater costumes). Girl Scouts improved my public speaking skills from 0 to maybe a 5. Both girls graduated high school and attended college. Melissa (art major) has held a variety of jobs and filled my house with diverse of creative art. Lauren moved to Twin Cities to be a junior high science teacher. Then Lauren got Wilms kidney cancer, losing that battle in 2020.

[Continued on the next page]

My most memorable Wabasha AAUW experience was being a presenter for 7th and 8th grade career days, explaining what I do and how custom electronics and PCs work. There were several silent auctions to raise funds, to which I brought a contribution and bid. I currently live in Eyota in a downsized house with daughter Melissa and 3 cats. Bill is still in Wabasha. I am working on gracefully closing Davidson & Associates, hoping to be done and RETIRED before the end of 2023. I'm looking forward to visiting my sister and brother more often, sorting and scanning that pile of pictures, having more music making in my life and enjoying making new friends at diverse events with AAUW.



STATUES FOR EQUALITY

Several months ago, Mayor Kim Norton was contacted by Australian artists Gillie and Marc Schattner, founders of Statues for Equality, an initiative to increase the representation of women in public sculptures worldwide. Since that first contact, a committee of local women from various arts and women's groups, including AAUW, has been meeting to discuss the feasibility of working with Gillie and Marc to create a sculpture of a notable Rochester woman. While the local project is still very early in pre-planning stages, a potential candidate for a sculpture has been identified: Amelia Hatfield Witherstine.

In addition to being the matriarch of the Withers family which included a mayor and state legislator and the owners of the Rochester Post-Bulletin, Amelia was the first woman elected to the Rochester School Board in 1911, the first woman president of the school board (1914-1923), and the first woman to serve on an Olmsted County jury. Was she an AAUW member? It would be interesting to know.

While it is nearly impossible to single out an individual woman in Rochester's history, the committee foresees that this project could be the first in a series of artworks, whether statues, busts, or plaques, honoring women from diverse backgrounds who have played significant roles in our city.

If you want to learn more about this project or have ideas about how AAUW could be involved, please contact Beth Nienow or another board member.

