



Columbia Branch Newsletter

CONNECTIONS

What We Look Forward to in the Spring

February 14, 2023, Tuesday, 7 p.m., *Human Trafficking in Mid-Missouri*, **April Rottweiler**, survivor and board member of STOP Human Trafficking coalition of Mid-Missouri **(on ZOOM)**
Report on annual fundraiser for the Eva Johnston Scholarship

March 14, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., *Nelle E. Peters, Pioneer Missouri Architect*, **Rachel Forester**, AAUW-Kansas City **(on ZOOM)**

April 11, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., *President's Address*, **Karen Francis**, AAUW-MO President **(on ZOOM)**

In April and May we look forward to the Science Student Scholar Awards, the State conference on May 6 (virtual?), and our May banquet.

RECURRING MEETINGS ON ZOOM

Book Group: 2 p.m. Saturdays, February 4, March 4, April 1 (no fooling!)

AAUW Women@lunch: 11:30 a.m., the fourth Thursday of each month, beginning January 26, 2023.

***A Happy
Halloween
Get-together
Oct. 27***



Monthly Social Events

On Sunday, November 6, several of us met at the Rhynsburger Theater on the MU campus to enjoy a performance of the Broadway play, *The Prom*, which was nominated for a Tony Award. In the play four eccentric Broadway stars who are struggling with their careers and looking for publicity use social media to find a girl from a small town in Indiana with a problem: Emma Nolan wants to take her girl friend to the prom but the homophobic PTA is trying to prevent her from doing so. When the Broadway players come to town to help Emma, there are more changes than anyone expects and everyone's life is touched. This was a humorous yet touching way for the AAUW group to learn more about DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion).



On December 4, some of us met at the Winter Wonderland Holiday Market at the Stoney Creek Inn to shop, listen to music, and enjoy hot chocolate. The 40 vendors included local artists, artisans, and small businesses alongside local musicians singing festive tunes. There was a beverage bar, and baked goods were also available for sale. It was a good opportunity for us to see each other in person and do a little shopping.

Mid-day Monday, January 9, found us at the Forum Theater to see *I Want to Dance with Somebody*, a movie based on the life of Whitney Houston. We were able to talk as a group and enjoy seeing each other in person afterwards.

For February, we are planning to go to the Stephen's Warehouse Theater to see the matinee performance of the Shakespeare play *The Merry Widows of Windsor*. We hope to see you there. You will need to go to the website to buy your tickets in advance because it is a

popular time and play. One possibility for March is to go to the State Historical Society of Missouri for a lunchtime talk by SHSMO art curator Joan Stack on the second Tuesday of the month. If you have any questions or suggestions for activities you would like to do, please contact me at [<parkerd@missouri.edu>](mailto:parkerd@missouri.edu). We always have fun when we get together as a group. It's also a good time to introduce your friends or family to AAUW and hopefully increase our membership.

Debbie Parker

Red Stocking Tree Again a Success in December

How great it was to be together again for the holidays! At our December 10 branch meeting at D. Rowe's Restaurant, we were able to enjoy the fellowship of the season and share in making gifts to the AAUW Fund. THANK YOU all for your generosity.

We learned a bit about our national AAUW Fund and where the money goes when we make our donations. There was also a national 'match' going on until the end of the year, so all gifts were matched, dollar for dollar. AAUW is a national organization, doing



many important projects to ensure that women and girls have a more equitable future. We are happy to do our part in funding those projects and programs.

It was fun to see all the red stocking being hung on the tree! Our total donations for the year, for our Columbia Branch were \$2,213. Our total last year was \$2,819, thanks to some special gifts. Many thanks to those who gave a minimum of \$100 during 2022 as they will be members of the MO Century Club and to those who gave \$250 who are Century Club Plus members. Columbia Branch is always a recognized leader in giving at our annual state meeting.

Emma Buckingham was introduced as our new C/U rep for MU. Kathleen Slane then added the FUN portion to the meeting with several holiday word games and activities. We all needed to help each other on those! My thanks to all for another very successful Red Stocking Tree event! Together we ARE making the world better for women and girls.

***Diane Ludwig,
AAUW Fund Chair***



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD 2022-2023

ELECTED OFFICERS

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Special Coordinators

Book GroupCarol McAllister. pcmcal@gmail.com**STEM Coordinator**Linda Evans. lindakayslp@gmail.com

APPOINTED OFFICERS

*AAUW Fund*Diane Ludwig. dbludwig22@aol.com*Communications*Jane Biers. BiersJ@missouri.edu*College/University Relations*Jane Biers. BiersJ@missouri.edu*Eva Johnston Scholarship Chair*Marilyn McLeod. marilyn_mcleod@yahoo.com*Historian*Debbie Parker. ParkerD@missouri.edu*Newsletter Editor*Kathleen Slane. SlaneK@missouri.edu*Public Policy*Marilyn McLeod. marilyn_mcleod@yahoo.com*Web Manager and Facebook*Marianne Cole Fues. marfues@hotmail.com**Branch Website. columbia-mo.aauw.net****State Website. aauw-mo.aauw.net****National Website. www.aauw.org*****Co-Presidents' Message from Jane Biers and Diane Ludwig***

As we end 2022, we look back to see exciting programs thus far. We met the new mayor of Columbia, Barbara Buffaloe. We then joined with LWV and DBRL for the Holly Burgess Public Policy Forum on the new voting requirements. We also caught up with Dr. Heather McCullar at Benton School to see how their STEM/STEAM projects were going. And in December we met for a holiday meal and word games and our Red Stocking Tree fundraiser. Last week, we had an insightful presentation by Dr. Marjorie Sable on abortion rights since the Roe decision.

Along the way, our book group, headed by Carol McAllister, is discussing some amazing books, we've visited the State Historical Society of MO, attended a play at the Rhynsburger Theater, and gone to the movies. Debbie Parker, Membership VP, has several other activities planned in February and March, so do plan to join in.

We are excited to announce that AAUW MO is leading the planning for a major Central States AAUW Regional Conference to be held in St. Louis in October. Thirteen states are being invited. Stay tuned for more details and save the dates of October 19-21, 2023 for a trip to St. Louis!

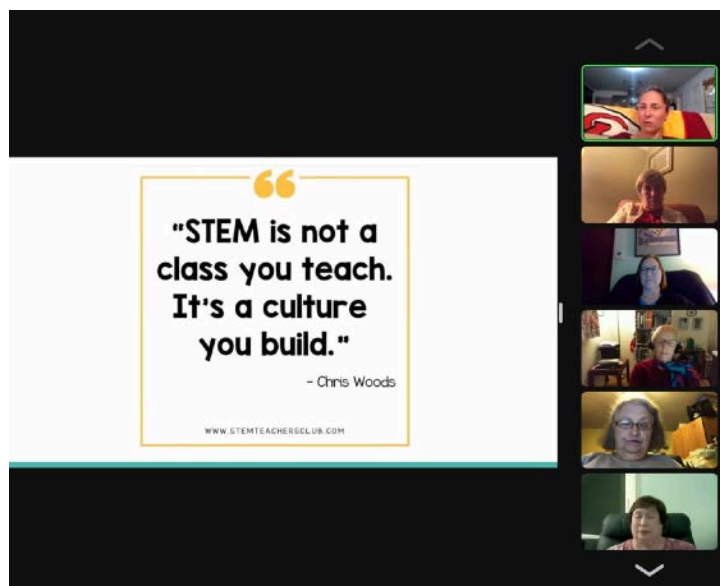
Our February meeting is focusing on human trafficking in our area, and we'll hear from an actual survivor, April Rottweiler. February is also the time to make our annual donations for our Eva Johnston local scholarship. Be watching your mailbox for your donation envelope. As always, AAUW Columbia is helping to keep our members active and growing.

Happy 2023!

Nominating Committee Selected

Our thanks to Pat Carlson, Jane Crow, June DeWeese, and Debbie Parker for serving on the Nominating Committee and helping us select our new leaders for 2023-2025. Each of us can play a role in keeping AAUW Columbia strong. Please say YES if you are asked to serve. All board meetings are via ZOOM.

Heather McCullar explained how a subject is integrated throughout the curriculum, creating STEAM.



We gathered on ZOOM on November 15 for an update on STEM at Benton School. Heather McCullar, who has worked there for 17 years, as a second grade teacher and now media specialist (librarian), explained that Benton is a lottery school, 75% African American, and with a highly transient student body. Equally, teachers and principals only stay 5-10 years. These are the circumstances.

STEM has changed to STEAM, which means a shift in emphasis from encouraging student interest in science and math to exposing elementary school students to integrated content, planning, and creative expression. For instance, in physical science they might design a structure that uses energy; then in writing they will write a proposal that advocates for renewable energy; and in art they will build their structure in cardboard. The class earns stars for their performance and when it has accumulated 30-40 stars, they can do an experiment. The school also currently has a garden and nine hens; each week a different class collects eggs and cleans cages.

A STEM showcase was held this past fall with guest speakers, tractors, animals (a peacock and a goat), a demonstration from a high-school robotics team, a robotic dog built at MU, a policeman, a geologist, and a banker.

The result is to break down the silos that tend to be created by separated subjects, to give names to jobs and occupations. Engagement is up and disruptive behavior is down.



Abortion Access in the Aftermath of Roe

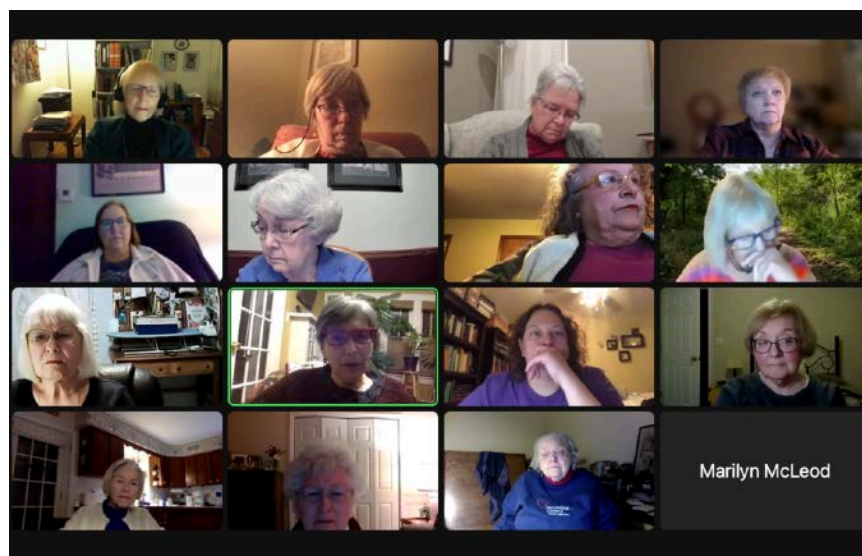
Sixteen members met on ZOOM on January 10 when Margie Sable, one of our members whose first professional job was as an abortion counselor at Washington University and who is now a professor emerita of Social Work at MU, sketched in a brief history of growing political opposition to abortion in the US beginning with Ronald Reagan and George Bush. Legal battles have become more important and in 2016 Planned Parenthood of the Great Plains hired a full time lawyer; she is now CEO of the organization. The chief obstacle to abortion used to be that the doctor who performed an abortion had to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital (no more than a 30 minute drive away); MU Health Care can not perform abortions because it receives federal funds. Other obstacles varied, such as a 24-hour waiting period in Kansas versus a 72-hour waiting period in Missouri.

Canvassing before the August primary vote in Kansas was very well funded by the ACLU and Planned Parenthood and others. A consultant for this group did focus groups throughout the state and found that what resonated with voters was not knowing someone who had or needed an abortion but rather “they can’t take away my rights.” It became a massive grassroots campaign. Michigan and Kentucky have also now voted yes for abortion rights, and Sable is hopeful that focus groups will soon be set up in Missouri.

For current information on which states restrict and protect abortion go to <https://states.guttmacher.org/policies/> Women increasingly need to travel to get an abortion, and some clinics are overwhelmed: one in Overland Park, Kansas, can only see 18% of those who call. Patient navigators at Planned Parenthood help investigate how to travel, where to stay, child care, and how to access funds in each state and nationally. Health facilities are also moving to be close to airports. This situation of “health equity” discriminates against the poor, who usually can not travel.

To a question about medication abortions, which can only be done up to about 10 weeks, Sable responded that they are now the most common type of abortion. But some states require that the same doctor see the patient for both the first and second consultation, which can be difficult.

A useful discussion was followed by a brief business meeting.



Unconscious Bias – Some Basics

Prepared by AAUW MO Diversity Team

Definition of *unconscious*

- 1: not marked by conscious thought, sensation, or feeling
- 2: not knowing or perceiving: not aware
- 3: not consciously held or deliberately planned or carried out

Source: [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#)



Definition of *bias*

- 1: an inclination of temperament or outlook especially: a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment: prejudice

Source: [Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#)

Unconscious biases might be inconsistent with our values.

We all know what overt biases are — they are shown openly and are not secret or hidden, but did you know that we all have unconscious biases, too? These are biases that might be inconsistent with our values, that we would never knowingly act on and that we weren't even aware we had. And having them doesn't make us racist or sexist or homophobic, for example. Still, becoming aware of them is the first step to ridding ourselves of them.

So, let's understand more about unconscious bias.

Why does unconscious bias happen? The easiest way to understand unconscious bias is figure out why it happens. Our brain uses short cuts.

At any given, moment we are bombarded with lots of different information, but our brains can only process a fraction of that information at once. So, to help us try and make sense of the world around us, our brain uses short cuts. Those short cuts are shaped and informed by our experiences. But, because sometimes the things we need to make sense of are unfamiliar, bias can enter the picture.

Let's look at an example. At the upper right of this page is an image. What do you see? Triangles, circles? How many?

This is the Kanizsa Triangle. Most people see a solid white triangle pointing upwards, an inverted triangle pointing downwards, and a set of black discs. But the fact is, none of these shapes are actually present in the figure. (In fact, this image is of "Pac-Men" and V's, not triangles and circles.)

This is an example of our unconscious mind using familiar information to try and make sense of what it sees, because in the absence of complete information, our mind needed to rely on something to help us figure it out. **That is unconscious bias!** Perhaps now you can see why we said earlier that because you have it doesn't make you bad inherently and once you realize it exists you are empowered to do something about it.

(cont'd.)

So, what can you do?

1. Self-awareness is the first step
2. Create safe spaces to have open discussions about the biases you have
3. Increase your contact with people who are dissimilar
4. Set realistic expectations

We're not going to be able to change our unconscious mind over night, but with some hard work and dedication, we will be able to make progress. Only when we confront our biases are we able to truly recognize the value diversity brings to an organization like AAUW. It's important for our continued growth and sustainability as an organization to make a concerted effort to be inclusive and create spaces where everyone feels welcome.



AAUW Book Group Titles for Feb. 4 and March 4

In January, the Columbia AAUW Book Group began 2023 by reading *Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague* by Maggie O'Farrell. This historical novel reimagined the lives of Shakespeare's wife and children whom he left behind in Stratford while he pursued his remarkable playwriting career in London.

February's book choice is *Educated: A Memoir* by Tara Westover. Westover was born to survivalists in Idaho and was so isolated from mainstream society that she had to educate herself. Her memoir is a "universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers."

Possible titles for March are *The It Girl* by Ruth Ware, a murder mystery, or *Vanderbilt*, a biographical history of the Vanderbilt family by Anderson Cooper. Anderson Cooper's mother is Gloria Vanderbilt.

The Book Group encourages fellow AAUW members to attend its 2 pm Zoom discussions on the first Saturday of each month. You don't have to have read the book and you don't have to become a regular participant. Your friends who are not members of AAUW are welcome, too.

***Carol McAllister,
Book Group Coordinator***