

AAUW Capital Branch Annual Report 2022 – 2023

For more than 75 years, AAUW Capital Branch has served its members through collegiality, education, and inspiration. As part of the national organization, the Mission of AAUW is **“To advance gender equity for women and girls, through research, education, and advocacy”**. Its Vision is **“Equity for all”** and its Values are **“Non-partisan. Fact-based. Integrity. Inclusion and Intersectionality”**. The achievements of our Branch this year are the result of a committed Executive Board and a dedicated membership whose values support the goals of our organization. During the 2022 – 2023 year, the following goals, objectives, and action plans have guided our work.

**BRANCH GOALS**

1. To promote diversity, particularly in ethnicity and age, in branch membership and activities through targeted outreach to local community groups.
2. To increase the effectiveness through our Branch communications and activities by building members’ technical skills.

3. To continue to promote a deeper understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**BRANCH OBJECTIVES**

**A.** **Membership: To recruit, engage, and retain members.**

1. Make concerted effort to have all members feel welcome
2. Increase visibility and awareness of AAUW’s principles, policies, positions, and priorities to new and continuing members via inclusion in the newsletter, Fall Member Event, monthly and annual meetings.
3. Generate activities to seek and retain a diverse membership, especially as to age and ethnicity. Support new AAUW targeted outreach efforts to diverse community groups.
4. Provide a variety of interest groups to increase membership involvement and engagement.
5. Promote volunteer opportunities for member involvement with Branch activities.
6. Increase outreach and support to members dealing with Covid 19 constraints to participation.
7. Market to community groups e.g. Rotary, League of Women Voters, Chambers.
8. Financially sponsor potential members including students, young women, women of ethnic diversity.
9. Follow up on members who do not renew.
10. “Buddy System” for new members to remind them of meeting and encourage participation in Interest Groups.

**B. Program: To provide a variety of programs which highlight AAUW’s mission and public policy, while meeting the interests of our members.**

1. Survey the membership regarding their priorities for monthly program topics and speakers.
2. Provide opportunities for member feedback and comments via ongoing use of program evaluation forms.
3. Provide programs in a variety of formats:
4. Short (10 – 15 minute) interactive presentations with follow up. Address member questions on topics in monthly newsletters.
5. Longer (45-minute) presentations on priority topics.
6. Community tours
7. Seek opportunities to work with other organizations on priority topics.

**C. Public Policy: To bring awareness of AAUW’s public policy.**

1. Engage local elected officials in discussion related to public policy.
2. Encourage members’ participation in AAUW’s Two-Minute Activist.
3. Promote voter registration with the community, including increasing awareness of AAUW’s website on voter education materials.
4. Educate and empower voters by co-sponsoring non-partisan candidate and issue forums with League of Women Voters and Sierra Nevada Forums.
5. Promote passage of ERA Amendment, Question 1 on the November Ballot.
6. Educate voters how to ensure accuracy when casting their ballot.
7. Encourage participation in Grassroots Lobby Days.

**D. Philanthropy: Provide support for local scholarships, the AAUW Greatest Needs Fund, and other local community projects such as STEM-related projects.**

1. Promote the sale of pecans to generate income.
2. Sponsor the Annual Feast of Chocolate to generate income.
3. Choose a community group to collaborate with Capital Branch on Feast of Chocolate.

**E. Community Collaboration: Collaborate with other community groups to pursue common goals and principles focused on support of women and girls.**

1. Develop an Allyship Program

2. Identify potential groups which AAUW member might attend/join.

3. Encourage AAUW members to join other community organizations to learn about their important issues and report back to the branch.

4. Share information about important issues from other groups with Capital Branch membership.

(List of potential organizations was removed from this goal.)

Our Board met regularly throughout the year, beginning in July, when our goals, objectives and action plans were reviewed and updated. At the September 2022 meeting, these new goals were reviewed and members voted to adopt them for the new term.

A nominating committee was formed in early 2023 to identify officers for the 2023 – 2024 year. A Slate of Officers was identified and presented to the Board and Membership for a vote. The new officers are:

President Patricia Cuocco

Co-President Joann Carpenter

Vice President- Programs Iris Blasdell

Co-Vice President-Programs Alice Meyer

Vice President-Membership Rita Osborne

Co-Vice President-Membership Mary Wilson

Treasurer Betsy Strohl

Co-Vice President-Treasurer VACANT

Recording Secretary Michele Gleitsman

Co-Recording Secretary Carly Page

Corresponding Secretary Shirley Hammon

**Membership**

Membership played an active role in ensuring that our members remained informed and engaged in Branch activities. Beginning with the production of our annual survey and offering monthly updates on member activities, our membership Vice Presidents **Sharon Orgain and Rita Osborne** kept us well informed through newsletter articles, periodic emails, name tags with new lanyards, and welcomed and counted attendance at each meeting. Bravo to a very successful year!

Keeping our members engaged in our Branch is an important function and one that **Cathy Haber** and her Interest Group team have done so well. Cathy has reported on attendance at each of the Interest Group gatherings and it is clear our members enjoy a wide variety of options. Participant numbers in the following Interest Groups were:

Group Leader Number of Members

Afternoon Book Group     Rita Osborne 15 members

Evening Book Group Jane Johnson       13 members

Gourmet Group   Jan Sullivan.           13 members

Hiking Group   Barbara Kuehner 12 members

                                        Stephanie Facchini

Great Decisions Group.     Barbara Kuehner.   12 members

Informal Luncheons Cathy Haber

 We had 11 lunches this year.

May The Pink House 6

June Eve’s Eatery           7

July               La Capital       9

August          Wally’s                   9

September Tito’s 4

October         Nashville Soc Club 5

November     Tail Dragger 5

December None

January         Black Bear Diner 5

February Reds.                       5

March           Cafe Girasol.           3

April               Bella Vita       8

We had a total of 19 different members participating with an average of 6 members at each lunch. The total number of members participating in the Groups and Luncheons was 37 which would be 56% of our total AAUW membership. This is very close to prior year data.

**Meeting Documentation**

Capturing the essence and details of each meeting is an art and a skill. Minutes of our meetings provide a history of our Branch for the future. It is also another mechanism to keep members engaged in our activities when they are unable to attend. Kudos to **Mary Wilson** **and Michele Gleitsman** for diligently recording our activities this year. They have provided our current and future members with a legacy of our events for 2022 – 2023. We are grateful for their work on behalf of Capital Branch.

Another way we help our members stay connected is acknowledging them during times of celebration and times of trial. Our thanks go to **Maureen Smith**, Corresponding Secretary for the well-wishes of congratulation and support. Members are encouraged to contact our new Corresponding Secretary, **Shirley Hammon** or the new Co-Presidents, **Patricia Cuocco or JoAnn Carpenter** when the occasion arises for cards to be sent.

**Board Highlights**

Our Board met quarterly again this year in July, October, January, and April. In the July meeting, Board members reviewed and updated our Branch Goals, Objectives and Action Plans. These were reviewed and adopted by our members in September.

In October, Fundraising was an important topic for Pecan sales and planning for a “virtual” Feast of Chocolate. The ever-popular Holiday gathering was discussed and planning for that event was underway.

January’s Board meeting discussed further implementation of the goals of an active Allyship Program. Many believed that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) would dovetail nicely together and Kathy Steinle will work with others to begin planning for the next term. There was also a discussion about helping to make members aware when there are significant losses or illnesses with members or families. Various solutions were discussed. It was also brought up that the Branch consider a winter time change to an earlier hour due to traveling in the dark. No decision was made.

April’s Board meeting discussed elements to be considered for inclusion in the next term’s budget. Final plans were discussed for the Scholarship and Installation meeting at the Governor’s Mansion in May.

**Program Offerings**

Our Program Vice Presidents, **Diane Koditek and Iris Blasdell** provided excellent opportunities for learning about a variety of topics. Our “September to Remember our Members” was held once again at the Governor’s Mansion. The highlight was a presentation by our very own Past President and current Nevada State President, **Caroline Punches**. She updated the group on National and State AAUW issues and offered an important reminder about our organization being Political but Non-Partisan. This is especially critical during an election year.

October brought a very interesting program from *Braver Angels* presented by Ian Smith. The focus was supporting the political depolarization that is prevalent and understanding the importance of listening to all viewpoints. Our planned program presented by Fred Loken did not occur due to weather and scheduling conflicts. Instead there was a lively discussion regarding suggestions about how to engage others through our Allyship focus – a new goal for 2022 – 2023. While we missed hearing from Fred Loken, the time was well spent in discussion.

Many thanks goes to **Barbara Kuehner** who hosted our very festive and fun Holiday gathering. With members and their significant others, we were able to socialize and embrace the spirit of the season.

Due to very snowy and dangerous weather in January, we met via Zoom and heard a presentation on Our Water in Carson Valley by Shannon McDaniel. She shared with us facts about the water table and concluded her presentation by speaking about what it is like to “work in a traditionally male” field.

February’s program focused on mental health issues in our region and was presented by Laura Yanez. She brought research and insights from NAMI – Western Nevada and addressed concerns related to support systems for women and girls. She also provided numerous materials and resources to our members.

Our very own **Beth Mancl and JoAnn Carpenter** presented an update on the 2023 Nevada Legislature Session and the Expectations. They presented many bills that were of interest to our members and encouraged members to take advantage of the excellent website, NELIS where one can leave support and messages for legislators, as well as, find out about hearings and progress of BDR’s to Bills. Due to wintery weather, this meeting was held on Zoom.

Our April Business meeting was designed to be a fun event with food, raffle prizes, and all the business that needed to be addressed. There was an excellent presentation by our Past President, and current Nevada State President, Caroline Punches about our National election, Board members running for re-election, new Bylaws, and revised Public Policies. The new 2023 – 2024 Officers were elected and there was preliminary report on next year’s budget. The final budget will be presented to the members at our May Scholarship and Officer Installation meeting May 20th to be held once again at the Governor’s Mansion.

Again, this year, we have encouraged attendance at our member meetings by offering a Zoom option and it has been received with enthusiasm and increased numbers in attendance. The plan is to continue this option as we have purchased a subscription from Zoom.

Our final meeting of the year in May honored our Scholarship recipients. Each had the opportunity to share their high school achievements and their plans for the next chapter of their lives. They were inspiring and brought to focus the importance of the work AAUW Capital Branch does all year in order to support such amazing young women.

In addition to honoring our scholarship women, Capital Branch recognized and thanked the outgoing officers who served the Branch with dedication and commitment for the past two or more years. A big THANK YOU and gratitude go to:

**Diane Koditek - Program**

**Sharon Orgain – Membership**

**Maureen Smith – Corresponding Secretary – Remains on Scholarship**

**Mary Wilson – Secretary – Remains on Membership**

**Cathy Haber – Interest Group Coordinator**

Finally, The elected officers for the 2022 – 2023 term were installed by **Dr. Janice Noble**, Past President of Capital Branch. The “Rainbow” installation offered suggested colors that each officer could brighten their role and duties. The members wished the officers congratulations and best wishes for a successful year.

An important aspect of keeping members engaged is the publication of our monthly Newsletter. Special thanks to **Cindy White** for the publication and providing timely reminders and distributing the newsletter each month. Thanks to all those who contributed throughout the year.

**Public Policy**

In addition to providing excellent presentations on the many political issues in today’s environment, **Beth Mancl and JoAnn Carpenter** provided leadership in engaging our members in understanding details about local, statewide, and national policies relevant to AAUW issues. We are grateful for their dedication to keeping us informed with up-to-date and concise information, especially critical during the 2022 election and legislative session. Bravo!

**Philanthropy**

As always, our Pecan orders and sales were right on target again! Thanks to **Kathy Steinle and Shirley Hammon** for their amazing dedication to Pecans! Every single pecan was sold and we met our fundraising goal once again due to their amazing energy and enthusiasm for this project. Congratulations on another great fundraiser!

Our traditional Feast of Chocolate was once again turned into a “Virtual, calorie-free” fundraising campaign this year due to the lingering Covid 19 epidemic. Despite this circumstance, **Patricia Cuocco and Kathy Steinle,** along with their team, received substantial donations through the goodness of so many long-term supporters of this event. We are grateful to this group for their dedication in the face of obstacles to continue the tradition of the Feast of Chocolate. Special thanks goes to our **anonymous donor** who helped us to exceed our budgeted goal with a $1000 donation. A big THANK YOU! We are hopeful we can return to our fun-filled in-person event in 2024!

Our Branch owes a debt of gratitude to our Treasurer, **Betsy Strohl.** She expertly managed our funds making sure income was added into account, and disbursements for various donations and scholarships were properly executed. We appreciate the regular updates and responses to members’ questions. Our thanks to you for developing our future budget which has been adopted by the Board and approved by the members in May and, of course, agreeing to remain as our Treasurer for the next term. Thank you!

**Community Collaboration**

It is my delight to be able to report that **Kathy Steinle** has accepted the role of DEI Coordinator. During the last part of this term, she has begun planning her effort to enhance the Branch’s understanding of these concepts and working with her team to facilitate the coordination with our Allyship Program goal. Our Branch is grateful to have her talent and expertise working to develop this new role and responsibilities this position offers. Thank you, Kathy, for sharing your time and talents with us.

While it has been difficult in the past three years to work with other organizations, Capital Branch has been able to successfully keep our relationships going through Zoom and other in-person contacts. It is note-worthy that the League of Women Voters is back in Northern Nevada and has joined with Sierra Nevada Forums and Capital Branch to present Candidate Forums last Fall. We have had representation on the Nevada Coalition for Women’s Equity. Our connection with Western Nevada College has grown stronger as we have been meeting there for two wonderful years. We continue to be grateful for allowing us to use their classroom for our meetings.

The relationship with Envirolutions has been a wonderful opportunity for us to put into action our desire to assist young girls in pursuit of their goals related to STEM education. We are grateful to our members who dedicate their time and energy regularly to create kits for teachers and students. **Thanks to Barbara Kuehner and her committee for their leadership in this important endeavor.**

Thank you to our members who have continued to support AAUW Capital Branch through the year. Our Branch has been a source of education, an up-lifting spirit, and collegiality for all. It is because of these attributes that our Branch continues to grow and thrive. We are grateful for your continued dedication and support to our AAUW Capital Branch.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Noble, Ph.D.

President

AAUW Capital Branch