



American Association of University Women

Tomah WI Branch – Organized in 1972

## theTwigbranch newsletter – October 2, 2020

### President's Message:

Hello Ladies and Gentleman of the AAUW Tomah Branch,

It's the kick-off of our 2020-2021 season and I think our local organization is more meaningful and needed than ever! Higher education institutions are facing big challenges as they manage the quandary of trying to provide safe, affordable, face to face tutelage. Strides made in women's advancement are tumbling downward with women taking the brunt of household responsibilities and childcare during quarantines and requirements to 'work from home' with small children. Articles on the topic state, 1 in 4 women are leaving or considering down shifting their employment; other reports suggest this pandemic is putting women 10 years behind men in their career paths. Women of color hit the hardest, with highest death rates per 100,000 for Blacks, Indigenous, and Pacific Islanders in that order, plus job loss, and income loss. What comes to mind is the old adage, "Think Globally, Act Locally." Perhaps this may be where our power and efforts could be most impactful.

So, all in all it looks like a potentially exciting year as we support each other through the emotional roller coaster of the day to day life challenges we face and are stronger together making a difference for ourselves and our community!

It was so very nice to see many of you virtually at our meeting September 29. We are fortunate to have that option! Our goal is to remain very flexible, patient and dynamic this year as we feel our way forward and respond responsibly to a changing landscape. Written communication is always limiting, so let's feel free to reach out to each other anytime and repeat things a few times so they stick! And we might as well embrace change as a constant.

Some enrichment activities this fall:

- **[Listen to PODCASTS - SHE VOTES!](#)** The Mother of All Celebrations. Our foremothers turned ridicule into respect and oppression into the power of a majority. BY ELLEN GOODMAN AND LYNN SHERR | AUGUST 20, 2020
- Missed Wisconsin AAUW Public Policy Day Webinars? No Problem Check out the Presentations <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/>

Our next Meeting on Google Meet will be October 19th at 6:00 P.M. Learn more about the benefits of being a Chamber of Commerce Member, and more about our AAUW FB and Website pages! Until then stay very healthy in mind, body and spirit!

Respectfully yours,  
Deb Thiel, Branch President

*Hello, autumn!*



## Minutes of Our First Program Season Meeting:

Tuesday, September 29, 2020 6:00 pm via Google Meeting. Those participating were Barb Sullivan, Deb Young, Deb & Dick Thiel, Bonnie Peterson, Nancy VanderMeer, Joline Powell, Sonia Olson, Julia Palmer, Megan Divyak.

President Deb Thiel opened the meeting and Deb Young followed with a review of the agenda and a “check-in type” ice breaker. She then presented Tips for Technology Use.

Deb Thiel spoke about the unusual circumstances we are in and the transition of officers during the summer. She said that Audrey Chambers thanked all members for helping her through her presidency. Audrey was unable to join the meeting due to unexpected circumstances.

Julia Palmer provided a summary of the March Women’s History celebration which was the last time our branch met face-to-face. There was discussion regarding doing more recognition of what special things women have to offer in our county, referencing the early years in which our branch observed Women’s History Month. Julia Palmer and Sonia Olson, along with anyone else wishing to help, will review ideas to expand/enhance Women’s History Month.

Deb Thiel discussed the Jim Theres public program we had planned, noting that several sponsors had come forward. While the event was cancelled due to COVID-19, the experience did show that we could rally community support for this type of event. It was decided that we should keep this idea on the back burner for now.

There was discussion about Tomah’s July 4<sup>th</sup> observance and how our participation brought attention to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. It was good exposure for AAUW.

Due to the pandemic, our programs can’t be all planned out for the year. For the time being, we will do things virtually and concentrate on communications within our branch. Deb Thiel continues in her role as AAUW-WI District 4 Coordinator, which she feels will provide her with a great deal of information and insight to share with our branch members.

Deb Thiel read a thank you note received from Bonnie Peterson. *“I greatly appreciate the caring thoughts and beautiful flowers I received from AAUW-Tomah. It was a comfort to have the support of my AAUW friends during our family’s challenging circumstances in recent months and the loss of my father. Many thanks and a virtual hug to each of you.” -- Bonnie*



There was a review and discussion of the recent survey of our branch members. We had thirteen respondents using Google Forms. Most people indicated availability on Monday.

Preference was for meeting monthly. A list of suggested program topics, organized into categories, was discussed. Tele/Video conferencing was preferred for now. It was decided that there should be follow-up with those not on the Google Meeting tonight to check if the format is viable for future participation.

Joline Powell said that we currently have 18 members.

Megan Divyak is working on our on-line presence, posting new items on Facebook and our website. Please make sure you can access both. She will be looking for member feedback, content suggestions, and photos. Going forward, she will also be sending out communications from the Tomah Chamber of Commerce.

Deb Thiel suggested that we do some branch Strategic Planning on what we want to accomplish. She also noted that materials from AAUW WI Public Policy Day 2020 are available at AAUW-WI.net and other resources are available under the national AAUW website. An Example are the upcoming Equality Network events. She also noted that the 2021 state convention will be virtual.

Deb Young and Julia Palmer entertained some suggestions for how we want to handle our popular December holiday event. Deb Thiel and Julia Palmer will join her on working on this.

At our next meeting (Monday, October 19, 2020) we will be looking at how we can communicate and use our on-line resources. Megan Divyak is slated to present discuss the Tomah Chamber of Commerce and our benefits of membership.

The traditional Mary Kay Cosmetics fundraiser will be researched, and the result shared at our next meeting.

It was noted that Dick Thiel has recently co-edited a book that is soon to be available. "As the Twig is Bent" is a Memoir of Wallace Grange founder of Sandhill Wildlife Area. More information will be coming on this. Congratulations, Dick!

We ended the meeting by sharing what we each hope to do in the next couple of weeks.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

**Our Mission:** The American Association of University Women (AAUW) advances equity for all women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.

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- If you have newsletter items, please send them to Bonnie Peterson, AAUW Secretary, at [wordemp@centurylink.net](mailto:wordemp@centurylink.net) or 12808 County Hwy. PP, Tomah, WI 54660. Phone: 608-372-7501

