



American Association of University Women

Tomah WI Branch – Organized in 1972

the **Twig** branch newsletter – May 4, 2021

Recap of our Annual Meeting on May 3

This was a wonderful in-person gathering with a lot of information and socializing over dinner at Tap House Twenty.

Attending were: Megan Divyak, Deb Thiel, Barb Sullivan, Jolene Renda, Julia Palmer, Martha Klatt, Tina Thompson, Tammy Hewuse, Michelle Clark, Cindy Zahrte, Audrey Chambers, Deb Young, Nancy VanderMeer, Dick Thiel and Bonnie Peterson. Special guests were 2021 NCCWSL scholarship recipient Clara Krause and her mother Nicole Krause.

NCCWSL is the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders — where hundred of young women come to turn a moment into a movement.

President Deb Thiel called the meeting to order. We all introduced ourselves and provided an answer to “one thing I know about women.” There were a wide range of thoughts expressed, all uplifting and affirmative of women’s inherent strengths. Thank you, everyone, for sharing.

OFFICERS & ELECTION

An introduction of our current officers was made. President: Deb Thiel; VP Program: Deb Young; VP Membership: Joline Powell; Branch Secretary: Bonnie Peterson; Finance Officer: Audrey Chambers; Communications Officer (FB, webmaster, Google account): Megan Divyak; Public Policy: Cindy Zahrte; AAUW Funds and Bylaws: Julia Palmer.

Deb Thiel thanked then and presented the officers with a AAUW 100 years of Suffrage commemorative pins.

Nominated and elected as New Officers were Audrey Chambers as Finance Officer and Tammy Hewuse and VP Program. Audrey and Tammy were sworn in by Deb Thiel. Congratulations, Audrey and Tammy!

DUES

Audrey Chambers reviewed the proposed budget for the coming program year. It is attached to the email with this newsletter. The budget was approved.

We held a discussion about dues and an how members can renew or join our Branch. You can go directly to the national AAUW website to renew with credit card. This is the preferred method. It will take care of the national, state and local dues all at one time. Disbursement of funds will come back from national to our local Branch and AAUW WI. Audrey Chambers will also accept checks made out to AAUW Tomah Branch, if mailed to her. Audrey’s address is 15400 Headquarters Rd., Tomah, WI 54660.

Dues are as follows: National\$62; State\$13; Tomah Branch\$16 = \$91.00 total.

National dues are planned to be increased during the next three years.

Julia Palmer moved to leave our dues as they currently are. Second made by Dick Thiel. Motion carried.

SCHOLARSHIPS

We held discussion about how to address two types of potential scholarships. One would be in the form of dues assistance to join AAUW and the other would be educational scholarships. Tomah Branch currently offers two scholarships to second year students at Western Technical College, according to our guidelines.

Dick Thiel suggested that we form a committee to handle scholarships. Audrey Chambers volunteered to head up the scholarship committee in regard to the local Branch scholarships. Dick Thiel volunteered to research out scholarship opportunities at the state and national level through AAUW. There are opportunities that are not being taken advantage of by local members because we aren't aware of what is available via AAUW at the state and national levels. Thank you, Audrey and Dick.

Tina Thompson will be our STEM point of contact. Thanks, Tina.

STRATEGIC PLANNING for NEXT FALL

Deb Thiel is looking for input from the members in drafting a Strategic Plan for our Tomah Branch. This will assist our Branch in aligning with the AAUW WI objectives and help our Branch in earning Star Recognition. Interested in helping? Let Deb Thiel know.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Megan Divyak has been posting to Facebook at least once weekly. Thank you, Megan, for your outreach efforts. She urged us to visit our Facebook page and website. This is a collaborative effort, so please provide feedback or ideas to her.

She passed out AAUW business cards that were used at the recent American Legion Fish Fry fundraiser. The cards were designed by John Renda and we appreciate his assistance. They helped generate questions about AAUW during the event.

We discussed if it would be a good idea to get some tee shirts made with the AAUW logo for events.

NEWSLETTER

Bonnie Peterson explained her intent to send out the Twig a week prior to our scheduled meeting. If you have information to contribute, please let her know about a few days prior.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tomah will hold a parade on Saturday, July 3 at 10 a.m.

Business After 5: We can participate as Chamber members. July 21st at the Monroe County Fair. Network under the big tent.

Tina Thompson moved to adjourn the business meeting, seconded by Dick Thiel. The meeting adjourned.

PROGRAM ON FAIR MAPS AND GERRYMANDERING

Cindy Zahrte is on the Wisconsin Public Policy Committee. She provided a comprehensive overview of Fair Maps and Gerrymandering research through a PowerPoint presentation. Please see the slides attached to this email for opportunities to learn more about this important topic. She stressed that this is NOT a partisan issue. She pointed out the complications gerrymandering has created for local officials. The committee is advocating for Party-blind Map Design.

Cindy asked if our Branch would be interested in holding an event on this topic. No definite plans were made at our meeting, however.

Educate Yourself: The People's Maps Commission gov.ststus.egov.com/peoplesmaps

Can You Hear Us Now? Watch for free through May 5.

On May 13, 2021 there will be a state-wide webinar held.

Thank you, Cindy, for informing us about this important topic.

TELLING YOUR STORY

Our meeting closed with Deb Young sharing a project collecting and sharing our individual stories. She asked us to use the guide sheet she provided and to think about this over the summer. This was a nice way to close our evening.

A big thank you also goes to Cindy Zahrte for providing the flower centerpiece. They were lovely.

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