



Ferguson-Florissant (MO) Branch

Shirley B. and Pat K.
Co- Presidents

Wilzetta B.
Program Vice President

Gwen W.
Membership Vice-President

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Pat K., Editor

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The board will meet on August 3 at 11:30 at the Corner Coffee House.

APRIL BRANCH MEETING by Gwen W.

Approximately fifteen members of the Ferguson Florissant branch of AAUW and two guests were treated to an informative presentation on the connection between domestic violence and animal violence on Monday, April 20th at Immanuel UCC Church in Ferguson. The speaker for the evening was Suzanne Gassner from the Humane Society of Missouri.

Ms. Gassner gave background on the Humane Society, which receives no funding from state or national sources and is completely dependent on donations. She explained the distinction between animal neglect and the more serious animal abuse, although there is much gray area between the two. Ms. Gassner also reported that animal neglect and cruelty cross all social-economic lines. An affluent family is just as likely to mistreat animals as a poorer family in a less affluent area. Perhaps the most shocking statistic regarding animal abuse is that in 88% of child abuse cases, it is reported that there has also been animal abuse in the home. This strong correlation reveals the serious nature of animal cruelty. It clearly DOES lead to cruelty to humans as well. That is a powerful message that the Humane Society of Missouri attempts to publicize.

GALA SPRING LUNCHEON MAY 16 AT RIZZO'S RESTAURANT

Historical Reflections of Ferguson is the theme for the annual branch spring luncheon. Ferguson has a rich history; it was one of the first suburban communities in the St. Louis area and is celebrating 160 years of existence this year.

The program will also include Named Gift Recipients, special branch recognitions for contributions to AAUW Funds, installation of officers, and other special activities. It is a great way to end the AAUW year.

Invite your friends. It is open to the public; however, reservations are required. Rizzos Restaurant, 1839 Dunn Road, in Florissant, will be the venue this year. The luncheon begins at 11:30 am. Selections will be made from the luncheon menu.

For information or reservations, call 314-831-5359 or 314-831-6884 or e-mail gwenrosenfeld@sbcglobal.net.

PRESIDENTS' LETTER by Pat K.

Like the end of the calendar year in December, the end of the branch year is a time for reflection. This year in particular seems to require a thoughtful summary. We all know by heart the events that came to be called "Ferguson" worldwide; there is no need to recount them here. We have also seen similar events and reactions to them spread around the country. Sadly, we are not alone.

Here in St. Louis, several groups and individuals have responded to "Ferguson" in ways they

believe will eventually improve the situation for all citizens. Churches, community groups, universities, and individuals have all responded. So have college students who came to help register voters--perhaps not realizing that voter registration was one of the first responses by local groups including AAUW.

The Ferguson Florissant Branch has worked tirelessly to support and help improve Ferguson. Nothing we have done is particularly flashy or worthy of media recognition. It has been thoughtful action in a number of ways that we can contribute to the betterment of our community. Those ways all support AAUW's stated goals of advancing the well-being of women and girls. Since women and girls rarely exist in a vacuum, they also support men and boys in the areas of education, civic rights like voting, and, in this instance, financial recovery.

So what have the members of Ferguson Florissant AAUW done? We worked to register voters at more than one site. Carolyn and others continue to contact women-owned businesses to offer free listings that Jan Scott has made available in her online **Women's Yellow Pages**. In the Ferguson Florissant School District, we continue to mentor Robotics students and more of us are now doing reading tutoring in the OASIS program. We continue to meet in Ferguson, as we always have. Board meetings often are held at the Corner Coffee House. Branch meetings are frequently held at Immanuel UCC across the street from Ferguson City Hall. We plan to return to the Farmers Market this summer and fall and to participate in the city-wide yard sale in May.

Not everything we have done this year is directly tied to "Ferguson." Many of our traditional programs and events have also gone forward. These included the opening reception in September, the Christmas party featuring Anna and Elsa of *Frozen*, Game Day, attending Spring Fling, the meet and greet in April, soon the May Luncheon. Always, we have programs presented at branch meetings that address important topics. The annual Equal Pay Rally in Jefferson City is essential. Several members will attend the AAUW state meeting in Columbia May 2.

Because of events beyond our control, this has been an exceptional year for our branch. We have risen to the challenges by finding ways we can do our part in helping to create an even better Ferguson for all its citizens. We have also continued to enjoy several of our regular activities. We have done well this year.

PUBLIC POLICY by Susan D.

I love movies, don't you? Movies provide a respite from the barrage of bad news and seemingly insurmountable issues we all face, both personally and locally. Does anyone really have a do-able plan for fixing Missouri's education system? Will we see mass transit in our lifetime in STL county? Can we trust Iran? And, finally, what's to do about income inequality? I'm feeling a bit overwhelmed, so I turned to a movie last weekend. It had a provocative title, "While We're Young." I wanted to see what mistakes Hollywood thought we Boomers had made. Earlier this spring I had seen "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel" (another movie about aging) and loved it. It seemed to be about me, only me living in India. The characters had moxie, pretty good health, were ex-pats looking for excitement and adventure in their "new normal." There were even hints at sexual encounters. I liked "Marigolds." "While We're Young," however, did not address any issues connected with my definition of "old" which in that film was fixed no older than forty-five. Are you kidding? Happily, the leads agreed at the end of the film that a few important experiences lay ahead of them despite their being "old" and in their forties.

Both movies made me think about what it means to be "old" in our culture at this time in our lives. Unlike other issues, "aging" does not have a fixed public policy to which we can all refer for comfort, much less for guidance. I have always taken comfort in the old adage, "Grow old along with me. The best is yet to be" but lately I've also tried to expand my understanding of what it means to be "old" by Googling terms and topics related to "aging in place," a phrase I've only recently started to see with some frequency. Some of these sites speak eloquently of the homelessness of older women and the lack of adequate resources to ensure safety and care for all women. These websites deal, not with Hollywood and its depiction of well-coifed silver heads and status symbols, but with reality as most of us know it: loss, income limitations, hard choices and friends to help us make a difference. You might want to check out: Women Living in Community and Communities for Baby Boomers. I learned about Barney Frank's mother, Elise Frank, who at 70 became an activist on behalf of older women. Very interesting and inspiring reading. Still--I love movies, don't you?

THE STATE MEETING CONNECTS TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION from Julie T., AAUW MO Program Vice President

Contact us by e-mailing Gwen at gwenrosenfeld@sbcglobal.net. Visit our website at fergusonflorissant-mo.aauw.net.

So you can't go to San Diego--AAUW MO is bringing a piece of National to you on May 2--Linda Hallman, AAUW CEO, will be with us as will Erica Stout, AAUW Training and Program Manager. Linda will be updating us on what is happening at National and giving us information about the new research. Erica Stout will present two sessions, "How to Market Your Branch," and "Designing Engaging Meetings." We are so fortunate to have been selected as one of the states chosen to have Erica as a presenter.

The Holiday Inn Executive Center in Columbia was selected as the site for the State Meeting. It proved to be a great facility for us last year and we have been promised no fire alarms this year!

The registration form was included as an attachment to the March newsletter and will be included this month. It can also be downloaded from the website <http://aauwmo.org>. Registration without a late fee ends April 15. **Don't wait! Sign up today.**

EQUAL RIGHTS ACTION DAY

April 14, 2015 Pay Equity Day

An enthusiastic group of women gathered at the capitol in Jefferson City on April 14, 2015, to commemorate Pay Equity Day. The day began with a Legislative Briefing dealing with bills that were being heard in either the House or the Senate or in committees. Several legislators brought messages about legislation they were working on; these included Reps. Bill Otto, Margo McNeil, Stacey Newman and Judy Morgan. Several other individuals representing various issues also made presentations, including Mark Jones for NEA, Angie Postal for Planned Parenthood, D.K. Hirner for Empower Missouri (MASW), who spoke on the welfare bill which would cut some benefits and affect recipients in other negative ways.

At noon the March for Women's Rights convened. Women with signs supporting women's issues marched into the capitol building, after which the Pay Equity Rally began. Reps. Deb Lavender, Mary Nichols, Margo McNeil and Senator Paul LeVota spoke of legislation they were sponsoring and the general mood of legislators as the session nears its end. Organizations making presentations at the Rally included AAUW, Coalition of Labor Union Women, League of Women Voters, Missouri Women's Network, NARAL.

During the day, attendees visited with their legislators, carrying messages of support for pay equity and other legislation that would benefit women.

AAUW ELECTIONS--This is a reprint of Shirley's Public Policy article from the April newsletter.

One Person One Vote!

The AAUW national elections begin this month. This is your opportunity to make your voice heard on the new officers, changes to the by-laws, and additions/subtractions to the National Public Policy Program. Information is available on the AAUW website or in the upcoming *Outlook*.

It is easy to vote! You may choose the method you want, either paper ballot or electronic ballot. You will need your membership number to vote; it is available on the label of your *Outlook*. Paper ballots may be requested through May 8. Electronic voting begins April 15 and ends June 19.

The candidates for office are Patricia Fae Ho, president, Alicia Hetman, vice president; candidates for board of directors are Sue Barley, Maria Ellis, Malinda Gaul, Sally Goodson, Eileen Hartmen, Rebecca Norlander, Judith Pfeil, Glenda Price, Ellie Hill, Traci Jensen, Melissa Johnsen, Martha Reeder, Pam Thiel, Dot McLane, and Eileen Menton. You may vote for up to 10 directors.

Changes in the by-laws are the following:

- Elimination of the degree requirement for membership
- Process for filling vacancies occurring after voting has begun
- Changing the titles of AAUW's leadership
- Changing requirements for vice president in certain circumstances

For a complete review of the Public Policy Program changes, check the March issue of the Ferguson-Florissant newsletter.

DIGITAL SCRAPBOOKING

Carolyn H. is hosting a Digital Scrapbooking party, presented by member Fran J. and Charlie R., on Wednesday, April 29 from 1-3 pm. This event is a fundraiser for AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund. Please RSVP by April 27, herkcmw@att.net or 314-867-4755. A flyer with more details is included with this newsletter.

**Contact us by e-mailing Gwen at gwenrosenfeld@sbcglobal.net.
Visit our website at fergusonflorissant-mo.aauw.net.**

GIFT WRAPPING

Several dates for gift wrapping at Barnes & Noble in Ladue have been secured. Any donations we receive are used for branch programs such as funding members to attend local and statewide AAUW events.

New this year are spring dates. They are May 9, the day before Mother's Day, and June 20, the day before Father's Day.

Lovene H. is organizing the volunteer schedule. Please contact her to sign up for a 3 hour shift on one of these dates. **May 9 is right around the corner and "wrappers" are needed. Please be generous with your time.**

The other dates for gift wrapping are, as usual, during the Christmas/Hanukah season.

PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING

The Annual Program Planning Meeting will be Monday, June 8, at Hidden Lake Retirement Community. It will be a complimentary luncheon beginning at 11:30. Everyone is invited to come and bring ideas.

The kitchen needs to know how many to expect, so please RSVP to Judy H. by June 1 at 355-1125 or mickey.holmes@att.net.

BRANCH DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

The Diversity Committee will not meet until the information kit and aids that are being put together by AAUW National are received. Anyone who would like to be part of this committee is welcome. Please let Judy H., chairperson, know at 314-355-1125 or mickey.holmes@att.net.

MEMBERSHIP

Once again, it is membership renewal time. Please complete the membership form included with this newsletter and send it, along with your check, to Lillian B. Complete details are included on the membership form. If you receive your mail through the US Postal Service, it is suggested that you include \$5 to cover postage.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP

The Tuesday Afternoon Book Group will meet at 11:30 on May 12. Hostess and reviewer Carolyn H. will lead the discussion of *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd. Bring a sandwich for yourself. Notify Carolyn if you will attend.

STORYCORPS--by Susan D.

The Ferguson Municipal Library is looking for volunteers to help them with their StoryCorps project this summer. StoryCorps is an organization that records, collects and preserves the oral history of everyday people. As one of ten libraries nationwide participating in the StoryCorps@yourlibrary program, they need all the help they can get. StoryCorps volunteers will help run the recording equipment, keep track of the paperwork for each recording session, and make sure the people telling their stories are comfortable and feel welcome. Training will be provided the week of May 11th. Anyone interested in volunteering may contact Amy at arandazzo@fergusonlibrary.net or call 521-4820.

FUN-RAISER TRIP

Who would like to go on a trip to Springfield, Illinois, to see the new Lincoln Library and perhaps other places connected to Lincoln? We could leave fairly early, have lunch somewhere, see the sights, and be home by maybe 5:00 pm. Let Lillian know which of these dates would be suitable for you: May 19, May 21, June 1, June 2, June 4, June 10, June 11. We will pick a day suitable for most of those who would like to go.

YARD SALE

Once again Virginia J. has offered to host our participation in the Ferguson Yard Sale on May 30. We were very successful last year in raising funds for the branch. Start setting aside items to donate. They should be priced. Virginia and her helpers from the branch will need to know if the price is firm or can be negotiated. Also, do you want unsold items back or can they be donated after the yard sale is over?

Contact us by e-mailing Gwen at gwenrosenfeld@sbcglobal.net. Visit our website at fergusonflorissant-mo.aauw.net.

Watch for e-mails or phone calls with additional information. Of course, Virginia will need help getting this done.

FERGUSON FARMERS MARKET

We are signed up to have an informational table at the Ferguson Farmers Market from 8-12 this summer and early fall. Our dates are 7/15, 8/29, 9/5, 10/10. Gwen Westbrook will be looking for volunteers for those dates.

DOWNTOWN LUNCH GROUP

The Downtown Lunch Group will meet on May 19 at 11:45 at Ferguson Brewing Company, 418 S. Florissant Road, 63135 (314-521-2220) RSVP to Kay M., 314-962-7487 or kicmeyer51@gmail.com.

In June, the Downtown Lunch Group will meet on June 16 at 11:45 at Hendel's Market Café in Florissant, 599 St. Denis Street, 63031. RSVP to Kay M.

ADELANTE BOOK GROUP

The Adelante Book Group will meet on May 28 at 1:30 at Barnes & Noble on Clarkson in Chesterfield. Carol M. will lead the discussion of *The Faith Club: Three Women Search for Understanding* by Rajna Idleby, Suzanne Oliver, and Priscilla Warner. A Muslim, Christian, and Jew strive for mutual understanding.

MEMBER UPDATE

Carolyn reports that Nancy is doing well at Life Care and would like visitors. Nancy says that lunch for a guest is only \$5. She would enjoy visitors at lunch time on Tuesdays or Thursdays. Be sure to call Nancy on her cell in advance.

CALENDAR

April 15-June 19--AAUW voting

April 29--Digital Scrapbooking

May 2--AAUW-MO State meeting

May 9--Gift wrapping at Barnes & Noble

May 12--Tuesday Afternoon Book Group

May 16--Annual May Luncheon

May 19--Downtown Lunch Group at **Ferguson Brewing Company**

May 28--Adelante Book Group

May 30--Ferguson Yard Sale

June 2--Program Planning Meeting

June 16--Downtown Lunch Group at **Hendel's Market**

August 3--Branch board meeting

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