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## Newsletter Sept-Oct 2021

### President's Message



Tracy Smiles

Welcome to the first newsletter of the AAUW Prescott Branch's 72nd year as an established organization here in the Quad Cities. If you are new to AAUW, or visiting and curious, I want to personally welcome you to an organization comprised of the most energetic, accomplished, intellectually vibrant, and generous group of women I know. I am honored to serve as president for the coming year.

When the Board of Directors departed for the summer, we were full of hope and excitement for the coming year. Those of us who gathered in the Yavapai College Sculpture Garden were practically giddy about the opportunity to see and talk to each other—in person—after a long lonely year dealing with the pandemic. The promise of an effective and available vaccine, coupled with a drastic drop in the number of cases, made it appear that the worst was behind us. I still hope that's true. And yet, here we are, witnessing a sharp rise in cases and hospitalizations, both nationally and here in our county. As AAUW member Judy Stahl noted in a recent communication, "We continue to endure the COVID-19 epidemic with an upsurge through the Delta variant. Even with all of the mediation strategies that civic-minded people have undertaken, it is a reminder that, like it or not, we are all in this together." Now, as we enter a new year, the Board of Directors is thoughtfully considering the needs and wishes of our membership as we make decisions going forward. **As I write this, the plan remains to meet at Yavapai College in person, but mitigation strategies are being explored, including the possibility of meeting again on Zoom.** Regardless, we will fully communicate with you any and all developments, as we hope the situation turns around, and soon. We have many exciting plans in development locally, statewide, and regionally that will bring many possibilities for our local Prescott members.

I would like to end this message by writing about one of the "behind-the-scenes-unsung-heroes" of AAUW Prescott, Karen Leja. Anyone in our organization who has served in a leadership role knows the invaluable support she provides through her position as liaison between the Yavapai College Foundation, where she works, and our organization. For example, as president it my job to ensure the space needed at Yavapai College for Board and General meetings is reserved. Here's a little secret—I've never had to do it. Karen makes all the necessary reservations for the entire year, including space adjustments when we have conflicts with college activities, without my even having to ask. Any query a board member has related to the college Karen, never one to pass the buck, always finds the answers, whether the request is something in her purview or not. Additionally, she attends scholarship committee meetings, oftentimes board meetings, and is integral in planning all our activities at the college, including our informal gathering in the sculpture garden. I can personally attest to her work ethic and generosity, and always, she is kind and personable. I heard that Karen is set to retire very soon. There's no question she will be sorely missed. In retirement, I hope she takes her place in our organization as a member who can reap the benefits of the fun stuff, like the large menu of options our interest groups have to offer. Karen has earned it, and so much more!



Karen Leja-AAUW  
Prescott's Unsung  
Hero

Looking forward to seeing you next month, one way or another, and embarking on a fresh new AAUW year with you.

## September 11 General Meeting: *September Social for Members and Guests*

*Look for details in your email—due to COVID concerns some meeting adjustments may be required.*



The first meeting of the AAUW new year will be held outdoors at Yavapai College on September 11th from 9:00-11:00 am. This outdoor meeting (the location at Yavapai College to be determined) will be an opportunity to socialize with other AAUW members, enjoy refreshments provided by the AAUW Board of Directors in a socially distanced manner, see the wide range of interest groups AAUW Prescott offers, and meet community activists who will discuss current events impacting our schools and community. **Lastly, if you know of someone who might be interested in joining AAUW please invite them to attend!**

The decision to hold this meeting in person was not made lightly. The board held in-depth discussions about COVID concerns and the desire for many to reconnect in person, and concluded that, for this month and this meeting, holding it outdoors is appropriate. We strongly encourage you to wear a mask; if you do not feel well or have been exposed to someone with COVID and haven't been tested, we ask that you stay home. We will make decisions regarding subsequent meetings according to the status of COVID spread in our community. We will let you know these decisions in plenty of time to plan accordingly.

Meanwhile, we suggest you bring a lawn chair, and hope to see you on September 11!

## October 9 General Meeting

*At our October meeting we are asking members to donate work-appropriate clothing and accessories for the 2021 Native Women's Conference.*



***My Journey through Indian Country*** Best-selling author and behavioral specialist, Katreena Hayes-Wood began her journey working with Native communities throughout the United States completely by accident. Today, nearly two decades later, she's learned firsthand, the needs and aspirations of Native people, especially the strong, devoted women in Indian Country. Katreena will share her unique perspective about the needs and desires of the Native people she now calls family. As Katreena shares, "You earn your place among Natives, but once you have walked with them, they call you family."

As an inspirational speaker Katreena is known for her fun, interactive workshops and has presented at numerous national and local conferences on captivating topics like her stress management workshop, "Find Your Joy," and organizational workshop, "Let's Get in Your Drawers."

During her career, Katreena has been awarded the National Top Ten Businesswomen from the American Business Women's Association, the Arizona Association of Career and Technical Education's Visible Difference Award and the Target Training International's President's Award.



Victoria Sweet, Public Policy Chair

## Flat Tax Budget in Arizona Explained

At the end of the recent legislative cycle in Arizona, a Flat Tax was approved, along with Senate Bill 1783 that creates a new small business tax category. The flat tax creates a \$1.5 billion permanent decrease in revenue each year. For individuals, the Flat Tax is 2.55% on taxable incomes up to \$27,272 and 2.98% on taxable incomes above \$27,272. For married couples filing jointly, the Flat Tax is 2.53% for taxable incomes up to \$27,272 and 2.75% for taxable incomes above \$27,272. Ninety-one percent of the tax savings will go to the top 20% of earners, and well over half of that (53%) will go to the top 1% of earners. The wealthiest Arizonans will pay 1.0% income tax on highest earnings while everyone else will pay 2.5% income tax.

The Tax Cap was proposed in response to Proposition 208, *Invest in Education*, approved by voters in November of 2020, which includes a 3.5% income tax surcharge on earnings over \$250,000 single filers/over \$500,000 joint filers. With implementation of the Tax cap, rather than boosting the total top income tax to 8% as included under Proposition 208, high earners will be capped at 4.5% total. They would pay the tax surcharge at 3.5% but their income tax would be capped at 1%.

As our Public Policy Committee promotes dedicated, equitable and adequate funding for public education in Arizona, we continue to monitor how the state budget impacts our public schools. In lieu of receiving close to \$900 million annually from Proposition 208, the reduced investment in education will be \$400 million annually. Returning income taxes back to former levels will be virtually impossible, because raising taxes requires a 2/3 vote of the legislature.

Education groups are preparing to go to the ballot in response to the Flat Tax, along with Senate Bill 1783, having voters approve three referendums to prevent the Flat Tax from going into effect. If the education coalition can collect the minimum of 118,823 signatures within 90 days of the session adjournment, it would put a freeze on implementation of the tax cut. Then, on the ballot in November of 2022, Arizona voters would decide if they want to allow these tax changes to go into effect.

## Scholarship Fundraising News

***On and Off the Wall—an AAUW guide to Public Art in Prescott— will be available in September.***

Prescott is fortunate to have dozens of examples of sculpture, memorials, and murals in public places, easy to find and interesting to study. The Scholarship Committee has prepared a guide which includes descriptions and locations of some of these pieces throughout Prescott, so contributors can plan walking or driving adventures to appreciate them for the first time or re-visit favorites.

The guide, entitled *Art On and Off the Wall*, will be available for a contribution of \$25 on Friday, Sept. 17. It can be downloaded onto an electronic device for viewing or printing. Information about this fundraiser, making contributions, and receiving the link to the guide will be forthcoming.

All proceeds will go to the AAUW Centennial Scholarship at Yavapai College, which is awarded to women students pursuing a career in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields.



## Membership Report

Membership highlights for the summer include meeting new members Stephanie Voss, Jacqui Mounce, Miriam Haubrich, Liz Bailey, and Anne Magno at our Brown Bag get-together in June. We'll have a complete report on new members and current membership numbers in our next newsletter.



R-L: Stephanie Voss, Jacqui Mounce, Miriam Haubrich, and Liz Bailey



Anne Magno

## In Memoriam

- **Past AAUW Prescott Branch President, Gail Bleeker**, passed away Friday, June 18th. Currently, there is no information available regarding contacts to whom to send condolences or information regarding a memorial service.
- **Betsy Whearley**, a member of AAUW Prescott, has died, after battling breast cancer for a number of years. Services were held **Saturday, August 28, 2021**, at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Prescott. she is survived by her husband Larry, one daughter, several stepchildren, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Please keep Betsy's family in your thoughts.

## Interest Group News

**The Lunch Bunch** has been meeting nearly every month through COVID by using places with outdoor seating. It was not always easy to find a place that could accommodate everyone easily. Now more restaurants are reopening, and we are trying new ones that have opened up. Our September lunch will be at Park Plaza Liquors and Deli. I recently tried one of their pizzas and was surprised that a liquor store/deli has the best pizza I have ever tasted. It was a different type than usual called The Fluke. I'm anxious to go back for more.

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**Our Craft Group** has had very few participants in the last events, but we are hoping to bring more people back soon. We hope to meet in October to do some mosaics. (See example) Anyone who is interested should start gathering things to put into their mosaic. I've been collecting assorted wall hangings at thrift stores that I can use as a base for these. They can also be done on flower pots, vases and trays. If you have old dishes or cups you can break them up, purchase some at thrift stores, or just buy stones, glass, and beads from craft stores or online.