



# THE SAGE HEN

## A Quarterly Publication of the AAUW Nevada State Council

### 2024 - 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter



Mission Statement: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

#### President's Message:

**Save the Date - April 26<sup>th</sup>**

#### *AAUW Nevada State Conference, Supporting Transitions Throughout the Life Cycle*

Transitions, which occur throughout the life cycle, evoke both exciting expectations and uncertainty. We are fortunate in the United States to have so many resources to help people through some of the major transitions of the life cycle: early childhood and school readiness; transition into adulthood; and retirement. Indeed, most of our AAUW members are either anticipating retirement or are already there. Many are asking the question: how do I make the most of this time of life?

Transitions can be particularly challenging for people with disabilities; but who among us doesn't know someone with a disability or hasn't had a disability themselves (just think of the aging process)? Our conference keynote speaker will be Mary Brabant, Director of Disability and Volunteer Programming at Goodwill of Southern Nevada. Goodwill partners with public, non-profit, and private entities to support people with disabilities as they move through life. Mary will share the history of Goodwill, as well as the numerous programs and partnerships they have to assist people at each stage of life – including retirement.

One of the most critical components of a successful retirement is maintaining health, fitness, and strength. We plan to have a speaker who can discuss activities that maintain and build strength as we age. What will be particularly enjoyable is that there will be activities you can engage in at home.

Another component of successful aging is brain stimulation through creativity. Plan to have some fun as you learn new and creative ways to keep your mind sharp.

The committee consists of Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert ([evelyn.aauw@gmail.com](mailto:evelyn.aauw@gmail.com)), Valerie McNay ([vjm5020@gmail.com](mailto:vjm5020@gmail.com)), Caroline Punches ([cpunches206@charter.net](mailto:cpunches206@charter.net)), Janet Usinger ([usingerj@unr.edu](mailto:usingerj@unr.edu)), and Jennifer Verive ([jmverive@gmail.com](mailto:jmverive@gmail.com)). If you have any questions or have suggestions for speakers, please contact anyone on the committee.

Mark your calendars now, Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>.



Janet Usinger, President  
AAUW Nevada State

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## PUBLIC POLICY

by Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert

As the U.S. presidential election concludes and the holiday season begins, many experience heightened stress and even depression. Focusing on well-being is timely with the election's volatility, reduced rights, and strained relationships. My recent doctoral research on mindful, trauma-informed practices for workforce development underscores the need for policies and laws that support overall well-being. For those anxious about the election, upcoming legislative sessions, or life, I offer these simple mindfulness exercises to help find calm and clarity in challenging times.

“Stop, Drop, and Breathe” is a program I developed initially for public policy and workplace wellness. I am sharing it with you now to help you manage any source of stress this season.



Follow these steps:

**STOP** —Pause any uncomfortable activities or disruptive thoughts.

**DROP**—For a few moments, Let go of the energy and attention you're giving to the discomfort.

**BREATHE** —Use the following breathing technique:

Bring your full attention to the present moment. Remember, when you return your focus to them, your stressors will still be there.

As you breathe, keep your awareness of the sensation of air moving across your upper lip.

- 1) Recognize that you're stressed. The first step is acknowledging that you're feeling stress.
- 2) Take three deep breaths:
  - Close your eyes.
  - Breathe in deeply through your nose, counting to four.
  - Hold your breath and count to four.
  - Slowly exhale for a count of four.
  - Hold your breath for another count of four.
- 3) Repeat this breathing cycle three times.

After completing the cycle three times, take one final deep breath and release it with a deep, audible sigh. Return to normal breathing. Consider this process a reset. Allow a feeling of calm or a possible solution to emerge, even if it's just a glimmer of peace.

Finally, set an intention — silently or out loud — for the desired outcome, and continue with your day (or night). You might be amazed at the power of simply stopping, dropping, and breathing! Now, onto some policy information.



## News from AAUW National:

The policy team shared the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record* for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress at <https://www.aauwaction.org/voter-education/congressional-voting-record/>. Even if people have already voted, the CVR provides valuable information as we prepare for the next Congress.

As you may know, Nevada's next biennial legislative session begins in February 2025. Happy Holiday Season! In the meantime, email me directly with any comments, questions, or concerns. Dr. Evelyn Thompson-Hilbert, DDP: [evelyn.aauw@gmail.com](mailto:evelyn.aauw@gmail.com)



## KEEPING RECORDS

By Holly Gallup  
AAUW Nevada Historian

Did you receive a bunch of files from your predecessor when you took your current Branch position? Are they under the bed in your spare room or squirreled away in your garage? Do you wonder what to pass along to your successor and what to do with everything else?

The files you received from your predecessor can contain both items that help you do your job and items that form an important part of the history of your Branch. You'll want to carefully consider which of the "help you do your job" items will be useful to your successor and pass those along when your term ends. But other items may have aged out of their ongoing usefulness yet still provide valuable documentation of your Branch's history. These items should be archived. Later this year, the AAUW NV Archives Committee will be sending Branch presidents a detailed list of the types of items to archive, as well as items you don't need to save.

If your files contain items that are important to the organization of the Branch (such as Bylaws or articles of incorporation) that you want to have ready access to, but want to ensure are never lost, you can make a copy, passing along either the original or the copy and sending the other to archive.

AAUW Nevada has designated the Nevada Historical Society (NHS), located in Reno, to hold the archives for AAUW Nevada and each of its Branches. Material should be sent to the Archive Committee (Holly Gallup, AAUW Historian, 421 Taryn Dr, Sparks, NV 89436) with a brief inventory of the material (for example, "Las Vegas Branch financial records, 2024-25"). The Archive Committee will submit that inventory list to NHS for acquisition acknowledgement and then file and catalog the material.

Not all repositories promise to catalog materials or to keep them indefinitely, so AAUW Nevada prefers that the material comes to the Archive Committee for placement in the NHS. However, if your Branch has given materials to another repository in your area, please let the Archive Committee know the name of the repository, the types of materials donated, and the conditions under which that repository accepted and makes available those materials. We'll add that information in the files for your Branch so future researchers will know where to look.

Questions? Send them Holly Gallup, AAUW Nevada Historian ([galluph@gmail.com](mailto:galluph@gmail.com))



AAUW of NEVADA  
2024-2026 State Leadership Council Members and Branch Presidents

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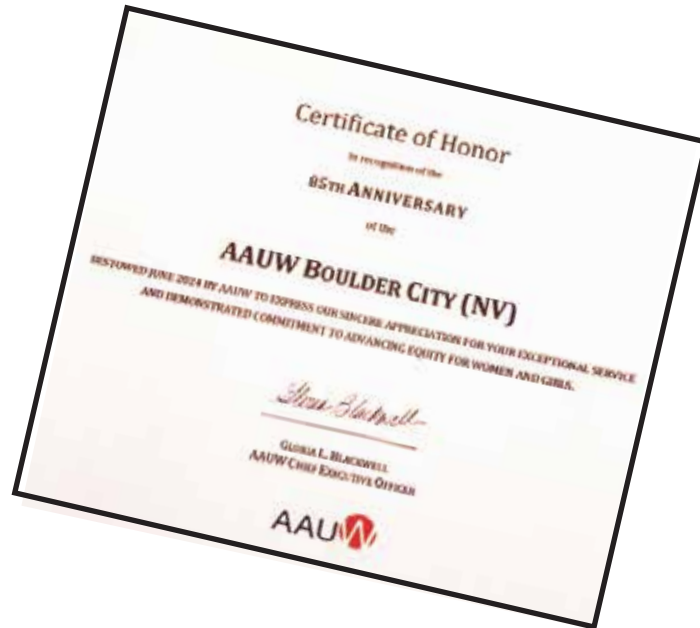
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**From the Boulder City Branch:**

Our Branch was founded in 1939 by the wives of executives overseeing the building of Hoover Dam. It was the first AAUW branch in Nevada. The national organization was founded in 1881. On Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, our members, scholarship recipients and friends celebrated in Laura Pyzer’s beautiful yard! Our longest members were honored, our scholarship winners were recognized, and heartfelt thanks were bestowed to volunteers who made certificates, emceed events and continue to volunteer above and beyond services for this event as well as many others!



Laura Pyzer receives a Certificate of Appreciation for hosting this event, monthly book group get-togethers, and for services as past president and wonderful scholarship fundraiser developer!!

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*From the Boulder City Branch (continued):*



Excellent past and present AAUW Scholarship recipients and wonderful volunteers: Sylvia, Amanda, Karina, Susan!!

Recognized long term members:  
Marilyn, Linda, Valerie and Anne!



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***From the Capital Branch:***

Capital Branch has been busy planning, coordinating, and attending Candidate and Issues Voter Forums in Carson City and Dayton. Unfortunately, our regular monthly programs have been cancelled or shortened because they fell on the day of the Vice-Presidential Debate and Election Day. Fortunately, supporting voting activities is one of our Branch goals this year -- at least we are on task! Besides informing ourselves about critical issues facing Nevada and the nation, we are busy selling pecans -- two new flavors this year: Southern Praline and Sweet Georgia Heat -- to raise money for our scholarship program. If you're craving some delicious nuttiness, please see the flyer at the end of this newsletter for more info!



AAUW Capital members Caroline Panches (left) and Nancy Scott (right - also a member of the League of Women Voters) in an iKolo 8 interview on the local forums

***From the Fallon Branch:***

Our September meeting at the new speakeasy in town was great fun. We had a meet and greet and acquired two new members. It is a beautiful place, so well decorated in 18th century mode. Our president was also presented with a birthday cake for her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday.

In October, we met with the Director of the Churchill County Museum and had a Behind the scenes tour. We have the best small museum in Nevada.

November 1<sup>st</sup> we will be meeting with a representative of the local Domestic Violence group. They do a very important and necessary job helping women and girls.

We are already planning for our big fundraiser in December. We have been selling homemade candy at one of the local Christmas Fairs for over 30 years. We have a good following and folks look for us.

In January, we will have a catered New Year's luncheon and white elephant sale - a great way to get rid of something and buy something else.

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*From the Las Vegas Branch:*

We began our year in September with a Meet the Local Candidates event. We invited judge, county, and city office candidates to speak at our meeting. Interesting that all those attending were women and the women running for judge positions. All spoke about the lack of resources and services for women and girls. This has resonated with our members, and we hope to explore this further.



Dr. LuAnn Holmes

In October, we heard an informative presentation on Civic Engagement by Dr. LuAnn Holmes, City Clerk, City of Las Vegas. She gave us much to think about.



Marilyn Zimmerman and speaker, Dr. LuAnn Holmes, City Clerk, City of Las Vegas

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***From the Las Vegas Branch:***



Our upcoming November meeting will be our annual fund-raising event to generate funds for our scholarships. It includes a silent auction as well as requests for cash donations. We were able to award six scholarships this year due to the generosity of our members.

December will include our annual holiday gathering at the home of Shirley Hills. This is an enjoyable event for all attending and a wonderful time to socialize with our members.

***From the Reno Branch:***

Happy Fall to one and all! By the time you receive this newsletter, the national election will be over, but we will be looking forward to the coming Nevada Legislature session for 2025. Our Reno Branch has offered a bill, first to the Governor's office, then to a legislator, to be introduced in the next legislative session. We are hoping that other Branches of AAUW Nevada would like to sign on as co-sponsors or supporters of this bill which calls for a minimal background check for candidates running for legislative office. (If your Branch is so inclined, please notify Barbara Baker, Public Policy Director, Reno AAUW, at [venturr2015@gmail.com](mailto:venturr2015@gmail.com).) The DRAFT bill and rationale can be found at this link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/16iQa2ScwkgLunJP9IV\\_2sOzoJ1fExYp2/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/16iQa2ScwkgLunJP9IV_2sOzoJ1fExYp2/view?usp=sharing)

So far, this has been our Public Policy focus this year. We also receive the newsletter from the Reno Chamber of Commerce listing their Candidate Forums, which we are free to attend.

After two full seasons of mission-based speakers on DEI and STEAM, we have cut back this season to four regular meetings and three socials. On November 16, the Branch will be treated to a docent-led tour of the Nevada Historical Society and specifically, the archives of AAUW Nevada.

In December, our Holiday party will be held at the Nevada Women's Fund office space with Ila Achtabowski as our speaker. It will also be a fundraiser for our annual scholarship. In February, we will collaborate with the Nevada Women's History Project in anticipation of Women's History Month in March. This is a work-in-progress at the moment.

We also have new officers:

- President/Administrator, Joanne Walen
- Secretary, Terry Owens
- Program, Jody Baden, and
- Public Policy, Barbara Baker



Meet the new AAUW Reno Branch President 2024-2026  
Joanne Walen



I've been in AAUW since my husband died in 2011. I lived in Mesa, Arizona and was looking for something to fill my time. The East Mesa Branch had a welcome tea which I attended and then joined. I was tapped to do the newsletter and went on to serve as Branch president for 4 years, Arizona state co-president for 2 years, national committee member for 4 years, and then moved back to Reno where I had been born and raised. I was a dual member of the Reno Branch while I lived in Arizona. Since I have returned, I've been the Secretary of the Branch and now the incoming president.

One of my accomplishments for East Mesa was to succeed in gaining 501(c)(3) status for the Branch.

*From the Tahoe-Nevada Branch:*

**GARDEN PARTY AND SILENT AUCTION**

AAUW Tahoe Nevada held our Garden Party and Silent Auction fundraiser in September, and both were a fabulous success! We raised nearly \$25,000 which will go directly towards funding our scholarship, awards, outreach programs (STEM and career vocational education), and our community education grants. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped made it the success it was. A very special thanks to our Fundraising Chair, Janet Usinger, who was tireless in providing leadership to this, our major fundraiser for 2024 and 2025.







*From the Tahoe-Nevada Branch (continued from page 9):*

### COMMUNITY GRANTS

Our Branch has awarded three community grants, totaling over \$8,000, that will benefit all three local Incline Village public schools. At Incline Elementary School, the funds will be used for the purchase of Merge Cubes for MakerSpace. Please click here to learn about this technology: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQ-yb4chHWk>. At the Incline Village Middle School and the Incline Village High School, teachers and students will learn about Artificial Intelligence with a program called Skill Struck. Additional funds will support College Counseling/Career Preparation and the Hispanic Outreach Personal Approach (HOPA) at Incline Village High School.

### TRAIL OF TREATS AND TERROR

Several members of our Branch participated in the local Trail of Treats and Terror at the UNR Campus in Incline Village. Our members had a great time distributing candy and fun to more than 1,300 participants. This is an annual event sponsored by the Incline Tahoe Foundation.





# **DELICIOUS PECANS**

## **FRESH PICKED FROM GEORGIA**

**Proceeds benefit AAUW Educational Projects**



- ✓ **Mammoth Halves**
- ✓ **Dark Chocolate Covered**
- ✓ **Caramel Clusters**
- ✓ **Chocolate Covered**
- ✓ **Cinnamon Glazed**
- ✓ **NEW! Southern Praline**
- ✓ **NEW! Sweet Georgia Heat**

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