

Branch News

The next all-branch activity is our fall luncheon on Saturday, September 27 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, lower level. Mark this date now on your calendars as well as the dates for our book group meetings listed below. The September Hilltopics will provide the agenda for the fall lunch.

The Nonfiction Book Group meetings are:

The June 9, meeting is being rescheduled. The book is A Passionate Mind in Relentless Pursuit by Noliwe Rooks (about Mary McLeod Bethune), and our discussion leader is Laura Loving. You now have more time to read the book.

Sept. 15, 7pm: Lovely One a memoir by Ketanji Brown Jackson: discussion leader: Rozelle Wright.

The Book Group takes the summer off and will resume on Monday, September 8, 7pm. The book is The Mighty Red by Louise Erdrich. We will meet at Denise George's, 411 Cheryl, W.R.



Spring Tea Report

Our Speaker, Beverly Branch, a Taos artist talked about her life and her art exhibit “Women of the Mesa,” that features a group of women of all ages living off the grid. Branch lives on the Tres Orejas Mesa in a straw bale house powered by propane, solar energy, and a wood-burning stove. She tells her neighbors’ stories through oil paintings and moving narratives. In both she honors their independence, connection to and caring for the land, and resourcefulness. We were treated to a selection of her paintings, all in stunning vibrant colors. The one included here is of three generations in a hogan. She spoke compellingly of lives lived in harmony with nature—tales of grit and spirit.



Carole - Music in the Dome by Beverly Branch Oil on Canvas - 30" w x 20" h \$2,100

50 Year Honorary Life Members, Mary Jane Giesler, Denise George and Natalie Markin were recognized with a certificate from AAUW national and flowers from the branch.

We welcomed new branch member, JoAnn Lysne.

The 2025-2026 coordinating council members were elected.

Judy Prono	Facilitator	505-412 3769	djprono@msn.com
Linda McLellan	Secretary	505-690-3939	lindamclellan@msn.com
Mary Ann Lindahl	Membership/Treasurer	505-660-2259	moonbeamx@comcast.net
Laura Loving	Justice-Equity-Diversity-Inclusion	262-853-4138	lalsfnm@gmail.com
Denise George	Newsletter/WEB	505-690-3534	denisegeorge@icloud.com
Nina Thayer	Public Policy	505-231-6312	gnthayer@cybermesa.com
Marilyn Doolen	At Large/historian	505-672-3571	mtdoolen@aol.com
Bev Cooper	Publicity	505-672-9696	bcooper@cybermesa.com
Appointed positions			
Karin Roberts	Hospitality	505-709-8930	karinroberts875@icloud.com
Helena Whyte	STEM	505-690-7824	mozden08@aol.com
Carol Neal	UNM-LA Scholarship		the_neals@prodigy.net
Open	University Representative		
Open	Nominating		

AAUW UNM-LA Scholarship Recipients shared their plans.

Marilyn Doolen introduced our scholarship recipients. Sarah Lujan is a single mother studying Business

Management, and will be continuing her studies at UNM in the fall. Both she and her daughter are graduating this year, Sarah from UNM-LA and her daughter from LAHS.

Alegandra Mendez is a first-year student studying early childhood education. She is an honor society student. She is dedicated to bringing her skills to work in her community with youngsters. Both women expressed extreme gratitude for the help we provided especially because we allow funds to be used for such items as medical expenses, baby-sitting and gas money. These needs might seem minor to us but major to many students.



A Farewell Note from Virginia White

"A heartfelt thanks to all of you for your friendship these last thirteen years. Along with the Los Alamos Opera Guild, AAUW was my introduction to this special community - the book groups, the programs and teas, the legislative previews, the state convention we hosted, serving on the Council, the Christmas luncheons at Rancho de Chimayo, Tech Trek and LA Cares, and Nina's Day Outs, I am thankful for all the experiences, for the discussions of issues and books, and for the lasting friendships.

Please stay in touch from time to time -- and let me know if you'll be on the Cape. We can eat seafood, walk along the National Seashore or one of the many beaches, and share a good time. Best to each of you and to our organization --"

Ginny White

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More branch news and Scholarship Information

Margaret Gibson and Marilyn Minshall have recently passed away. The branch was contacted by Marilyn's daughter that her mother had requested donations to our branch scholarship for members wishing to recognize her contributions to our branch. Margaret was very supportive of women's education, and her husband shared similar support for our scholarship.

If you did not attend the tea and would like to make a donation, or if you would like to make a contribution in memory of these wonderful women: here are the instructions:

Write the check to the **University of New Mexico Foundation** and note in the memo line, **for AAUW-Los Alamos scholarship at UNM-LA** and mail to our treasurer:

Mary Ann Lindahl

928 Circle Dr

Los Alamos, NM 87544

Thoughts from your JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) officer, Laura Loving:

What can we do in AAUW to respond to systematic DEI dismantling which threatens access to, and equality in, higher education for women students? Thoughts from your JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) officer:

1. A recent article in *Mediaplanet* from March 2025 explores how DEI restrictions affect women and girls in STEM. **Get informed!** https://issuu.com/mediaplanet_usa/docs/women_in_research
2. Sign up for the “2-minute Activist” feature on the AAUW website. This enables easy connections with legislators on relevant issues. **Get involved!** <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>
3. Consider writing to our local colleges and universities or to your own alma mater(s), to express support for diverse communities and practices that advocate for women, especially women of color or indigenous female students. A sample of a letter from the executive council of the Carbondale AAUW, printed on the back of this sheet, could serve as a guideline for your own correspondence. **Get empowered!**
4. Here is a link to a brief video from the Chronicle of Higher Education which outlines the origins of DEI on college campuses, and what its supporters and detractors say about it. The accompanying article tracks the different universities across the country that have been current crackdowns on DEI. You may want to subscribe to the Chronicle to keep abreast of collegiate news. **Get current!**
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/tracking-higher-eds-dismantling-of-dei>
5. What would you like to study, discuss, experience, or learn more about in this area? As your JEDI warrior, I’d be glad to facilitate discussions or provide opportunities for you to get involved. Feel free to contact me at lalsfnm@gmail.com or 262-853-4138 to share your ideas. Let me know if you want to receive this digitally for easier access to the links provided.

Laura Loving

Sample Letter



March 2, 2025

President Daniel F. Mahony
SIU System President
Stone Center
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, IL 62901
president@siu.edu

Dear President Mahony,

With this letter, the Executive Committee of the Carbondale Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) lends support to the leaders of the SIU system in their dedication and unwavering investment and commitment to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). We commemorate the long history of both SIUC and SIUE to vigorously put safeguards and support systems in place that reduce barriers and improve access to higher education for all people. We are proud of SIU's leadership who hold fast to the ideals of enabling all individuals, including those underserved and marginalized, to seek opportunities and make advancements through education and employment. These values are in line with the mission of the AAUW, an institution that was established in 1880 to remove the barriers and biases that stand in the way of gender equity. The AAUW advocates for equal pay and treatment of women, and to ensure equity and end discrimination for women in their pursuit of opportunities and leadership roles.

In the current climate of institutions of higher learning, SIU is gaining national prominence as a leader in the fight against abolition of DEI practices, teaching and traditions (see <https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2024/02/23/dei-college-backlash-athena-jones-vpx.cnn>). With Executive Orders and a Dear Colleague Letter dated February 14, 2025, the Trump administration has threatened to eliminate federal funding if DEI institutions and efforts are not terminated.

The Carbondale Branch of the AAUW supports the SIU Office of Antiracism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in standing up against these threats and continuing with the practices of enhancing diversity and inclusion. These are the foundations of the university system and important in providing educational opportunities to all citizens of this great country.

With Respect,

The Executive Board Carbondale Branch of AAUW