



Monday, May 13, 2024

Annual Meeting of the Grand Junction Branch Election and Installation of Board Members

PROGRAM: Chautauqua with Jessica Downing-Ford as Abigail Adams

Jessica has always enjoyed being in the spotlight. While growing up in Braintree, Massachusetts, she enjoyed gymnastics, dancing, and acting. She attended Emerson College where she graduated in '93 with a BFA in Dance. Jessica forgot her passion for performing and had large gaps between stage productions after becoming a mother. It was during a trip back to Massachusetts in 2014 that she caught a glimpse of her soon-to-be-heroine. She attended a reenactment of the signing of the Declaration at the Adams' National Park on the 4th of July and was brought to tears by a reading of Abigail's "Remember the Ladies" letter. She fell in love not only with Abigail but with the art of Chautauqua; she jokes that she'd been waiting her whole life to find an avenue for her talents. Jessica enjoys bringing Abigail to life for history classes in western Colorado as well as coaching students through the Young Chautauqua program with Colorado Humanities. She continues to research and visit Abigail's historical sites as she deepens her understanding of this complex, amazingly brave, female patriot.



LOCATION: Enzo's Pizzeria & Italian Cafe at 759 Horizon Drive, GJ

Note: You should know that Enzo's is opening as a special favor to AAUW on a trial basis. They will offer a limited lunch menu. **We really, really need you all to attend...with guests...to make a good showing.** Then, possibly, Enzo's might be our monthly meeting spot, which helps our Program VP so much with her planning.

MEETING TIME: 11:30 AM

RESERVATIONS Required: Please contact Karen Pieper Hildebrand at 432-312-4747 or kphildebrand@hotmail.com **no later than Friday, May 10th**. Please send a "yes" or "no" so that we know that you have received this message.

Branch President Jane Fitzgerald 970-241-9684
VP Programs Karen Pieper Hildebrand 432-312-4747
Secretary Lorelee Kerr 970-523-5510

VP Membership Lori Wood 970-234-5674
Treasurer Carol Airoldi 530-949-4448
Newsletter Jane Fitzgerald 970-241-9684

WHAT YOU MISSED LAST MONTH

Our April meeting speaker, Bob Hedlund, was so very interesting. It is always amazing to discover people of this caliber who live in our little part of the world.

Bob grew up in Telluride, the son of a miner. That resulted in his attending the Colorado School of Mines earning a degree in Mining Engineering. He went from a manager at a large uranium mine to working at the world's largest gold mine in Uzbekistan, with some of the poorest people. He said that one day at the edge of the mine "God" spoke to him, and asked him if this is what he should be doing with his life.

He started JDA (Joint Development Associates International, Inc) in 1993 in Uzbekistan, a country of 34.2 million people which borders Afghanistan. The goal was transformational development, i.e. alleviating poverty, agricultural development, health education, developing water sources, developing infrastructure, and providing humanitarian aid.

JDA would lend money to individuals for purchasing broiler chicks to raise, to buy a small tractor to use in farming, to provide drilling for water wells. Later they hired people to build adobe houses, and then to build schools. He trained women in the use of puppets for health and sanitation education (since most of the country could not read). The program was so successful that it expanded into Afghanistan, and some aspects were taken over by US Government. By 2021 JDA had 100 employees, only 2 of which were American.

He had to close the program on August 15, 2001 when the Taliban started to take over Afghani villages. He arranged to send 230 employees to Kabul to wait for evacuation, but US would not open the gate, and they went into hiding. In September, Bob started the Grand Valley Resettlement Program to help his former workers with coming to Grand Junction. On October 20, after hiring 2 planes he was able to board 568 employees and their families at Mazurka-e-Sharif. They disembarked in Abu Dhabi but US red tape kept them from further emigrating for 18 months. Of those, 15 families, most of which spoke English, did resettle in the Grand Valley. With the help of many volunteers and local churches all are doing well.

This last year Bob started ARISE (Afghan Resettlement, Integration, Stabilization, Empowerment) to continue to help the afghans who worked for USA employers...many are still trapped within Afghanistan borders.

Annual Meeting Major Agenda

Election of Board Officers – Karen Pieper Hildebrand was nominated to be Treasurer; so far the Nominating Committee has not found anyone to run for VP Programs. We will entertain any nominations from the floor for these positions. The positions of President, VP Membership, and Secretary are not up for election this year and the current officers will continue.

Program Ideas – Please bring your Suggestions for Future Programs, meeting dates and locations to this meeting, preferably in writing, so that we may discuss the best way to grow our branch membership. The Board needs your input!

From Branch President Jane Fitzgerald

IT IS NOT TOO LATE!!!

The National Organization is holding a vote for all members to decide if non-degreed members shall be eligible to become AAUW members and that AAUW can become the inclusive organization we say we are. AAUW is utilizing an independent, third-party voting system for this year's vote. Most members will receive emails from **AAUW** (however; when hovering over it, you will see: vote@simplyvoting.com) with your unique Elector ID and Password to vote. Subject line will read **AAUW Election 2024**. All members without an email address on file will receive a paper ballot by mail. No additional paper ballots will be sent during the voting period.

Voting will close on Wednesday, May 15 at 12:00 pm ET.

If you cannot find the email – please check your Spam folders. In conjunction with this membership campaign, AAUW National put together a webinar highlighting all the changes our organization has been through since 1881. It is worth the watch – click on this link:

[Click here to watch AAUW National's Past Webinar on Their Membership Question](#)

We respect everyone's position on the membership question. As shown, AAUW has a deep, rich history. We admire the effort of the inspiring women who have led the way in earning their degrees. We recognize, however, that in today's world higher education degrees are one of several paths needed to advance equity for women and girls. Professional certifications, on the job training, career technical experience and life experience all are alternative paths to obtaining education and the skills needed to become leaders and advocates for ending discrimination against women.

Hey! You Procrastinators! Make a Decision!

I just found out that as of 4/23/2024, 15 of our eligible branch members have not yet voted....that is only a 32% participation rate for our branch. **Sad!** National needs a quorum for the issue to be decided either way. Contact me if you are having a problem navigating the voting system...I will help you.

More Voting News

AAUW of Colorado's Executive Committee has agreed to co-sponsor the **League of Women Voters of Colorado's** election activities for the upcoming Election Day – November 5, 2024. Announcements will be on the Colorado AAUW website for Candidate Forums and other election information.

For in-depth voter education tools, visit the AAUW Action Fund website:
<https://www.aauwaction.org/>.

For League of Women Voters voter information, visit: <https://www.vote411.org>.

It may be Time to Renew your AAUW Membership.

Last week on April 25th, you may have received an email from the American Association of University Women under infosf@aauw.org about renewing your membership for the 2024-2025 year. Many of us who have been members for some time have memberships expiring on June 30th, newer members will receive a similar email when their membership is near expiration. Please know how much your participation is valued in our Branch!

2024-2025 AAUW Dues

No increase and the dues will be: National \$72, Colorado \$10, Grand Junction \$26 = Total \$108

Please note, this year the full \$72 of National dues is tax-deductible.

To pay dues by Check: Make check payable to AAUW Grand Junction Branch and mail to Carol Airoidi. **Do Not** Send Membership Checks to National....as that may confuse them.

To Pay Dues Online: Go to **AAUW.org** to log in. Please note: Carefully read the instructions on the log-in page. If you have recently changed your email address or are uncertain what email address should be used in the login, please contact Jane. Do not continue if you are unsure of your email address as a duplicate record may be created.

If you have visited the Community Hub before and have already established an account, you can log into your Personal Snapshot. Scroll down to the bottom and review your Membership End Date. If your membership is expiring soon (many will be June 30, 2024), click on the RENEW button to renew your national, branch, and state memberships. Follow the online directions. You will need to re-enter your Branch(es) and State when asked if you want to add them. **Don't skip this step!**

Grand Junction Branch Code is CO8010.

Honorary Lifetime (50-year) Members

It is very important that you NOT Renew Online!!

Coffee & Chat Special Interest Group



This fun and informative group will meet on **Saturday, May 25** starting at **9:30 am**. We are going back to **Spoons Bistro & Bakery**, 3090 North 12th Street, Grand Junction.

We will meet on **The Patio**.

Come when you can; bring a friend(s).

This month's **Discussion Topic** will be "Legislating Morality".

2023 AAUW National Year in Review

1. **47K+ Messages Sent**

AAUW's Two-Minute Activist network sent more than 47,000 messages to elected officials.

2. **40K+ Donors**

More than 40,000 members and thousands of donors supported AAUW – including nearly 450 college and university members and over 700 branches across the country.

3. **4-Star Rating**

AAUW earned 4-stars, Charity Navigator's highest rating, recognizing our commitment to best practices and industry standards in accountability, finance, culture, and community.

4. **4.2K People Trained**

AAUW's salary negotiation and financial literacy trainings through WORK-SMART continued to be AAUW's most sought-after programs, reaching 4,227 people in 2023 and 197,678 people to date.

5. **NCCWSL Returned**

AAUW successfully brought back in-person the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders, featuring 500 students from 170 campuses, 50 sessions, and notable speakers.

6. **4.7 Million Views**

AAUW's message of activism and advocacy for equity for all received nearly 4.7 million views across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter).

7. **150+ Hill Offices Visited**

AAUW's tireless Lobby Corps resumed visits to Capital Hill, visiting more than 150 congressional offices to advocate for legislation that uplifts and advances women's equity and access to opportunity.

8. **135 Years of Fellowships**

We celebrated the 135th anniversary of AAUW's pioneering American Fellowships Program – the largest fellowship program and the oldest non-institutional source of graduate funding for women in the U.S.

9. **\$6.1 Million Awarded**

AAUW awarded \$6.1 million in fellowships and grants to 277 awardees, maintaining our leadership as the nation's largest non-institutional funder of women's graduate-level education.