



# SAN JUAN SAGE

## WINTER 2024

Newsletter of the Durango Branch of the American Association of University Women

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### Board of Directors:

Nadine Ancel  
Peg Kimple  
Jean Olsen  
Sharon Powers  
Mary Rieke  
Faye Schrater

### Message from your Board of Directors

The Board is pleased to welcome Mary Rieke as its newest member. Please note the names of current board members in the side bar. Feel free to contact them with your suggestions, feedback, and comments on Branch happenings (contact information is on the current membership list). We're always looking for volunteers to help with programs, scholarships, etc. Also, the current newsletter editor is [Katherine Burgess](#); contact her if you have news of happenings which might be of interest to Branch members.

It's obvious that it takes a village to help educate young women. Fortunately, our Branch is willing to help by supplying both the manpower and the funds. In our fiscal year to date (July 1 to December 31, 2023) you have donated \$2,267 to the Sandy Brown FLC Scholarship Fund and \$1,142 to the NCCWSL Travel Grant Fund. We currently have \$21,071 in the Sandy Brown FLC Scholarship Fund, \$1,142 in NCCWSL Travel Grant Fund and \$500 in the Village Aid Project Travel Grant Fund. Thank you for your generosity!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SAVE THE DATE:** Spring book and author luncheon, a fundraiser for the Sandy Brown FLC Scholarship Fund, is scheduled for Saturday, April 6, 2024, at Fort Lewis College. This year's speaker will be Eileen Lyon, author of *Fortune's Frenzy: A California Gold Rush Odyssey*. You can read more about the book and its author by clicking [here](#).

**LIFELONG LEARNING:** The Lifelong Learning Series, a lecture series put together by the Professional Associates of Fort Lewis College, will begin its spring program on Thursday, 18 January. AAUW Member Katherine Burgess will offer a program on the history of travel on Thursday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of January. More information on the series and its lineup can be found in Judith Reynolds' *Durango Herald* article. [Click here](#) for more information and the complete schedule.

**WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER:** The Women's Resource Center is seeking nominations for local Extraordinary Woman of the Year Award. The National Women's History Month theme for 2024 celebrates "Women who advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion." If you know a woman who fits the theme, please contact WRC Durango at [mail@networkforgood.com](mailto:mail@networkforgood.com), or Tammy Tyner, Director at [director@wrc.org](mailto:director@wrc.org). You'll remember AAUW member Judith Reynolds was honored with this award last year with the theme "Telling Women's Stories."

**GREAT DECISIONS:** Along with the League of Women Voters, AAUW co-sponsors the Foreign Policy Association's *Great Decisions* discussion series on pressing foreign policy subjects. The first meeting will be at the Durango Public Library on January 30th from 11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. and future sessions will continue at the same time and place every other Tuesday for eight sessions. The first topic, *Science Across Borders*, will be moderated by Holly Vaughn. Subsequent discussion topics include "Mideast Alignment," "The Future of NATO," and "Trade with China."



AAUW Members **Judith Reynolds, Faye Schrater, Katherine Burgess,** and **Kathleen Adams** attended the FLC Foundation Donor's breakfast in September 2023. With them is AAUW Scholarship holder **Mara Melter**.

## INTEREST GROUPS

**Mahjongg Group:** Mahjongg is a game invented by the Chinese using plastic tiles. The game resembles Gin Rummy in that it attempts to match tiles into groups. We play every Tuesday in the foyer of the Durango Public Library. A free tutorial can be arranged if you think you'd like to learn to play. To learn more, contact [Katherine Burgess](#).

**Edouard Book Club:** The Edouard Book Club meets on the last Wednesday of each month (except December) at 2:00. The location changes each month. Our upcoming reading list:

January 29 "Olive Again" by Elizabeth Strout

February 28 "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Grams

March 27 "Jefferson's Daughters" by Catherine Kerrison

April 26 "Dinners with Ruth" by Nina Totenberg

May 29 "Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest" by Suzanne Simard

June 26 - we meet to choose the books for the coming year.

If you are interested in joining the book club, contact [Sharon Powers](#).

**Walk and Talk:** Occasional outings are proposed for a group visit. Recent outings included a visit to the Rosie the Riveter exhibit at the Animas Museum, and to the Aztec Ruins National Monument. The outings are organized by Board Member Jean Olsen.

**Birthday Luncheons:** Birthday luncheons take place each month on either the third Wednesday or the third Thursday of the month at 11:30. AAUW members whose birth occurs in the month of the luncheon are honored. The complete schedule appears below, although venues may change:

- Wednesday, 17 January – Animas Grill at Doubletree (formerly Edgemont Grill)
- Thursday, 15 February – East by Southwest
- Wednesday, 20 March – Seasons of Durango
- Thursday, 18 April – Tequilas
- Wednesday, 15 May – Alcé at Dalton Ranch (opens at 12)
- Thursday, 20 June – Nayarit
- Wednesday, 17 July – Brew Pub at Doubletree
- Wednesday, 21 August – James Ranch
- Thursday, 19 September – East by Southwest
- Wednesday, 16 October – Seasons of Durango
- Thursday, 14 November – Edgemont Grill at Doubletree
- Wednesday, 18 December – TBD

*Note: Our Interest Groups generally collect \$1 from each attendee at each meeting. The money is dedicated to our Scholarship Fund and, even though it is a small sum, it tends to mount up over time. The contribution is entirely voluntary.*



The December AAUW Birthday Luncheon honored **Marta Snow**, our only December birthday girl.



## Meet Ellen Swallow Richards - One of AAUW's Founding Members



### Ahead of Her Time

Ellen Swallow Richards co-founded AAUW when she was nearly 40 years old, along with Marion Talbot who was a generation younger. At a time when women were largely barred from higher education, Richards earned a chemistry degree, worked on clean water treatment and pollution, and even founded the first home economics and school lunch programs.

Richards was born December 3, 1842, in Dunstable, Massachusetts, to parents who valued education for both girls and boys. Between tutoring and housecleaning jobs, she saved the \$300 she needed for tuition and enrolled at Vassar College in 1868, where she earned her bachelor's degree in just two years — becoming the first U.S. woman to be awarded a degree in chemistry.

Desiring to continue her studies, she applied to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The administration admitted her, but only as a “special student,” making it known that her admission would in no way serve as a precedent for other women to attend. According to the Vassar Encyclopedia, “Her entrance to MIT was not easy; many institutions turned her down on the basis of her sex, and MIT declined all women applicants except for Richards, accepting her as a special student to ascertain women’s ability in the sciences.”

Richards completed the requirements for a master’s degree, but MIT refused to grant it to her, so Vassar awarded it instead. She then completed all the requirements for her doctorate but never received the degree. Despite these obstacles, Richards stayed connected with MIT. In 1876, with the help of the Women’s Educational Association of Boston, she established the Woman’s Laboratory at MIT and worked as an assistant instructor (without pay). Through the Woman’s Laboratory, she fulfilled her dream of encouraging other women to study science and provided an entry point for their training. At the lab, women were taught chemistry, biology, and mineralogy—Marion Talbot was one of Richards’ students. In 1951, Richards’ accomplishments were even featured in the *Wonder Women of History* comic series.

### Quote for the Season

The trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent are full of doubt.

-Bertrand Russell, philosopher,  
mathematician, and author (1872-1970)