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The Design, Implementation, and Assessment of Initial Change and Growth in a Local Voluntary Organization and its Members

Tracy Ann Weber

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THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT OF INITIAL CHANGE AND GROWTH IN A LOCAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION AND ITS MEMBERS

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Tracy Ann Weber

November 2002
THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT OF INITIAL CHANGE AND GROWTH IN A LOCAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION AND ITS MEMBERS

A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Tracy Ann Weber

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Chair: James Tucker

Member: Loretta Johns

Member: David Peñner

External: James W. Jacobs, Jr.

Interim Dean, School of Education

James Jeffery

Date approved: 12/11/02

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ABSTRACT

THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND ASSESSMENT OF INITIAL CHANGE AND GROWTH IN A LOCAL VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION AND ITS MEMBERS

by

Tracy Ann Weber

Chair: James Tucker
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

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Name of researcher: Tracy Ann Weber

Name and degree of faculty chair: James Tucker, Ph.D.

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Problem

During the past 30 years, Americans have steadily reduced their participation in the traditional forms of community involvement, such as clubs, associations, and organizations, that bring people together to effectively pursue a shared objective. In this postmodern society, leaders of community and nonprofit organizations find they are asking themselves difficult questions about the most effective methods of fulfilling their mission and simultaneously meeting members’ changing needs. Participatory volunteer-run organizations, such as a local branch or chapter of a national organization, face many challenges, making it hard to establish and maintain their organizations. They demand great energy of leaders, are vulnerable to moderate changes in their environments, and must rely on the good intentions of their members to get the work done. The same
conditions that make these organizations difficult to study are at the heart of their existence. The shift from association to advocacy has been recognized as evidence that people are still interested in collective concerns, but that they are developing new methods of involvement that better suit the demands of a fast-paced, contemporary world.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in this study was to design, implement, and assess the initial change and growth of a local voluntary organization, the Frankenmuth Area American Association of University Women Branch.

Method

I used participatory-action research to design, implement, and assess the initial organizational change in the Frankenmuth Area American Association of University Women (AAUW). The history and culture of AAUW, the community of Frankenmuth, significant aspects of social change, feminism, and organizational change were studied. Through action and reflection, three learning cycles were identified during an 11-month study period. The decisions made by leaders of the organization during the study were characterized according to eight key themes to determine whether the decisions were made from an organization-centered or a member-centered paradigm.

Results

During the first research cycle, the decision-making by the organization leaders showed a predominance of an organization-paradigm. In 10 of the 12 evidence indicators (75%), the group responded by honoring the organization instead of the members. During Cycle 2, the shift to more of a member-centered focus began to take place. Sixteen
Cycle 2. the shift to more of a member-centered focus began to take place. Sixteen instances are offered as evidence of the decision-making mind-set relating to the Frankenmuth AAUW, with only 62%, as opposed to 75% from Cycle 1, supporting an organization-centered paradigm. The profound shift from an organizational-centered paradigm to a member-centered paradigm approach took place during Cycle 3 when thirteen out of the 15 evidence incidents (87%) reflected a new approach to thinking from a member-centered paradigm.

Conclusions

Understanding cultural and environmental influences in addition to recognizing the decision-making paradigm of organizational leaders are valuable when seeking organizational change. A nostalgic desire to maintain hierarchical, often ineffective, organizations, redirects energy, time, and resources that could be used to further the organizational mission and add value to members’ lives. This study concludes that the ability to integrate newfound awareness may be the essence of what it will take for community organizations to grow, change, and evolve.
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There is a saying that it “takes a village to raise a child.” In this case, it took a community to create a dissertation. Several communities. My sincere appreciation to the community of learners (students, faculty, and staff) at Andrews University who helped me through this challenging process. My thanks to the Frankenmuth community and members of the Frankenmuth Area Branch of the American Association of University Women who supported me in this educational endeavor. And most importantly, my sincere appreciation to the “community” that is my family and friends (including Cirena and Desi) who encouraged me, supported me, and helped me keep a healthy perspective.

Kaitlyn and Carlye, you are the center of my universe and I dedicate this paper to you. May you, like I, find joy in the process of discovering your authentic self. Dare to believe that all things are possible. Enjoy the journey of discovery—even if the road includes the bumpy path of creating a paper that few care about, and even fewer will read, but that provides you with a learning experience like no other. Follow your heart, listen to your God, and stop to reflect and celebrate as you achieve your dreams.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Twenty-first-century organizations, both profit and nonprofit, are experiencing a metamorphosis. The increasing competition for resources has increased the stress level of organizations and individuals, forcing them to view their behavior differently. Organizational change efforts, such as process reengineering, total quality management, and self-directed work teams, have left many organizational leaders confused and depressed, believing that change strategies are improbable, if not impossible (Filippino, 2001).

The new themes in the organizational-strategy world include competencies, knowledge, networks, foresight, coalitions, extra-market competition, ecosystems, transformation, and renewal (Hamel, 1998). "As always, we must bear in mind that all change is ultimately social change" (Joiner, 1994, p. 201). In seeking meaning and understanding choices, there is a gradual rediscovering of how the natural world, the living world, operates (Senge et al., 1999). A paradigm shift takes place when the organizational purpose is expanded to integrate individuals' needs. This change in archetype reinforces closing the gap between individuals' choices and their values.
enhancing their commitment to activities and organizations that provide a return-on-investment in more than one life circumstance.

Social contracts between equals, generalized reciprocity between individuals and groups are at the heart of the most vital human achievements: the creation of society (Putnam, 1993; Ridley, 1996). Society is emergent, like life itself, evolving toward order, yet at the same time moving inevitably toward chaos (Hamel, 1998). Humans struggle to build order in the midst of chaos, layer upon layer, as life’s order takes shape. Order eventually emerges as elements of the system work together, discovering each other and together creating new capacities (Wheatly, 1999). But what channels the energy of society to evolve and change? Frederick Douglas in a letter to an abolitionist associate (1849) stated,

Let me give you a word on the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all absorbing, and for the time being putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightening. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical: but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. (as cited in Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 1991, p. iv)

American women have cooperated with one another in voluntary associations at least since the time of the American Revolution. Their organizations continue to function as an important vehicle for exerting influence and helping shape the nation’s political, social, and economic life. In 1881, efforts to create a collective feminine voice brought
alumnae of many institutions of higher learning together to form the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, which later became the American Association of University Women (AAUW) ("Women's Voluntary Associations," 1991).

The idea that organizations or associations exist to further the interests of their members is hardly novel. The notion goes back to Aristotle, who wrote in his *Ethics*, "Men journey together with a view to particular advantage, and by the way of providing some particular thing needed for the purposes of life . . . for the sake of the general advantages it brings" (as cited in Olson, 1971, p. 6). Community-studies literature from sociologists includes diverse views of how issues of resource mobilization and exchange shape organizations (Milofsky, 1987). But relatively little is known about the broad range of social organizations, particularly voluntary organizations, as they actually exist in our community systems (McPherson, 1988).

According to Senge (1990), systems thinking is a conceptual "framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots" (p. 68). Relationships have the capacity to change and evolve, inviting the learning process to come alive. We learn new things from the company we keep and by extending or elaborating experiences to what we already know. The living-systems view recognizes that people learn in cycles, moving naturally between action and reflection, and between activity and repose (Senge et al., 2000).

In recent years, organizational theory has moved toward recognition of the unpredictability of events, the permeability of organizational boundaries, and the dependence of organizations on their environments. These problems are magnified when we turn our attention to community organizations (Milofsky, 1987, 1988a, 1988b).
"Efforts to change social life at the local community level tend to antheoretical" (Milofsky. 1988a, p. 3). Communities are hard to study because they exist in the minds of people. Individuals create voluntary community organizations in response to need. The success and survival of these organizations depend on how well they serve the needs of their constituents (Milofsky. 1988a).

Birth requires an acceptance of the risk of death, whether that is of an individual, an organization, or even an idea. The Frankenmuth Branch of the AAUW came to such a point—one that posed a structural re-birth or death—in the spring of 2002. This study was undertaken to understand the shift in thinking that led Frankenmuth Area AAUW members to consider a significant, profound organizational change after 27 years.

When the camera of organizational and individual learning includes a systemic lens and a reliable and valid method of inquiry, such as participatory action-science research, we can begin to develop a picture of the process of change and growth. Evolution, growth, and change are considered long-term processes. Reflection and pause help generate understanding, forcing a slowing down that helps us actually move faster toward our vision of the future. The informational tools applied in this study may help us understand our choices, shortening the gaps between the "who we are/I am" and "who we/1 want to be."

**Problem Statement**

During the past 30 years, Americans have steadily reduced their participation in the traditional forms of community involvement, such as clubs, associations, and organizations, that bring people together to effectively pursue a shared objective (Loeb. 1999). In this postmodern society, leaders of community and nonprofit organizations...
find they are asking themselves difficult questions about the most effective methods of fulfilling their mission and simultaneously meeting members’ changing needs. Participatory volunteer-run organizations, such as a local branch or chapter of a national organization, face many challenges, making these organizations hard to establish and maintain. Such organizations demand great energy of leaders, are vulnerable to moderate changes in their environments, and must rely on the good intentions of their members to get the work done (Milofsky, 1988a). The same conditions that make these organizations difficult to study are at the heart of their existence.

Recent social shifts in voluntary group activity, and the absence of links from national to local groups, make it harder for Americans to band together to get things done (Skocpol, 1998). In this study, I sought to understand more about the decision-making process of community leaders who seek to integrate members’ personal values with an organizational mission. Increased understanding of the shift from an organization-centered paradigm to a member-centered paradigm is vital to organizational leaders as they work to reinvent their organizations to better meet the challenges of today’s chaortic society (a condition of society where both order and chaos co-exist).

**Purpose of the Study**

My purpose in this study was to design, implement, and assess the initial change and growth of a local voluntary organization, the Frankenmuth Area AAUW Branch. Understanding the reality and impact of culture comes neither quickly nor easily; they must be lived rather than reasoned or read about (Hall, 1989). One key to understanding and learning as we evolve and change is recognizing that our environments are an extension of ourselves, and because we are in a constant state of flux, our corporate and
social cultures will continually change and evolve. Through the process of participatory action-science research, I sought to understand the profound change evidenced by a shift in decision making from an organization-centered paradigm to a member-centered paradigm by members of the Frankenmuth Area AAUW branch.

**Importance of the Study**

This study is important because it contributes valuable knowledge about organizational change in volunteer women's organizations. The economic and social significance of American volunteerism has not been clearly defined. Among other things, associational and communal life provides the richness of citizenship and the rewards of personal and group responsibility (Wolfe, 1998). According to William Niederloh, chief executive officer of the National Results Council, a research group that studies social programs (Gerson et al., 1997), most of the information on volunteerism is not based on research, but is anecdotal. Researchers of the commons (a self-defining collective of people) have given extensive attention to the concept of civil society (Karr, 2001; Portes & Landolt, 1996; Putnam, 2000a; Skocpol, 1998; Van Til, 2000). Recently, Putnam brought the discussion of civil society to the attention of not only scholars, but also policymakers and, to some extent, the general public. Civil Society reflects a widespread sense that changes in the economy and in the organization of work, family, and neighborhood have outpaced the capacity of older forms of civic and associational life to help individuals and communities cope.

Civil society is “an independent domain of free social life where neither governments nor private markets are sovereign. It is a realm we create for ourselves through associated common action in families, clans, churches and communities”
(Dionne, 1998, p. 3). It is a "third sector"—the universe of volunteer organizations (Karr, 2001). Civil society is made up of the organizations and places where everyone knows your name, and probably a good many other things about you, including your commitments and your family. It encompasses, as Walzer (1998) wrote, "the networks through which civility is produced and reproduced" (p. 124). The need for civil society is rooted in the argument that this generation has the same capacity for innovation and inventiveness as did previous members of American society. There is a committed belief that "rekindling a spirit of social reconstruction is both essential and a realistic hope" (Dionne, 1998, p. 14).

According to The Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management (1999, A Time to Shape the Future section), we are living in a period of sharp transformation, one in which society is rearranging itself. Drucker believes that social-sector organizations will be needed even more in the next decades. He proclaims that these organizations will grow in order to provide what has traditionally been considered charity and "in services that aim to change the community and to change people" (Drucker, 1999, A Time to Shape the Future section).

Although there is information about the metamorphosis of community groups and civil society, current organizational-change research has focused primarily on the corporate, for-profit world. Participatory voluntary organizations are not typically studied for their life cycles or evolutionary change processes. The fluidity of group membership and activities such as the constantly changing leadership, members who have choices to stay or go with few or no repercussions, and funding sources that fluctuate and can be volatile make these groups difficult to measure. These groups are
often strong, invisible threads interwoven into our communities, binding people together in compelling ways. As new flexible, fast-moving organizational models increasingly occupy the social landscape, there is increasing value in understanding organizational transitions in the American social community. In order to revitalize the best of American volunteerism, there needs to be new emphasis on working together, not just “helping the poor” or “doing for” others (Skocpol, 1998).

Volunteerism has the potential to be unfocused or powerful, oversold or indispensable, "recreational" or transformational. There is a wide gap between the emotional investment required for a day of picking up trash along a highway and years of working with another human being. Yet, making significant change through the latter form of volunteering is the most likely way to get at society's core problems. These approaches have not been tried and found wanting; rather, they have been tried and found difficult. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the volunteer sector, as a whole, is motivating Americans not just to volunteer, but to sacrifice (Gerson et al., 1997).

According to results of a telephone survey of 4,216 adult Americans entitled The Giving and Volunteering in the United States (Independent Sector, 2001). 44% of the respondents volunteered an average of 3.6 hours a week. This translates into a total of 83.9 million adult volunteers in the United States. This figure equates to 15.5 billion annual volunteer hours at an estimated hourly value of $15.40 per hour, for a total dollar value of volunteer time of $239.2 billion. The hourly value of volunteer time was based on the average hourly wage for nonagricultural workers, as published in The Economic Report of the President (2001 Edition), increased by 12% to estimate fringe benefits
(Independent Sector, 2001). All volunteering numbers were for individual adults over the age of 21 who reported service for an organization (excluding informal volunteering).

The significance of understanding Frankenmuth Area AAUW’s organizational challenges reaches beyond the association itself to the stakeholders, including a worldwide network of other organizations. All female AAUW members are automatically members of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), a group representing 71 national associations and federations. The national AAUW organization asserted that its

Educational Foundation is the largest source of funding exclusively for graduate women in the world, supports aspiring scholars around the globe, teachers and activists in local communities, women at critical stages of their careers, and those pursuing professions where women are under-represented. (“AAUW Educational,” 2002)

Methodology

As a learning framework, action science is designed to help individuals, groups, and organizations develop a readiness to overcome barriers to organizational change by focusing on both the external and internal environment (Enhanced Designs, 2000). Action research encompasses a variety of activities rather than one specific format. The purpose of participatory-action research is to learn from your experience and apply that learning to bring about change. The principles of democratic participation and social action, and the cycling between analyzing a situation and conceptualizing or reframing the situation have the potential to bring about organizational learning (Dickens & Watkins, 1999).

Participatory-action research builds on the constructivist paradigm by integrating those who were previously considered subjects as participants in the research process. It
is essentially enthographic fieldwork over a period of time (Borgatti, 1998). Further, participatory-action research reflects goal-oriented experiential learning (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1974; Mead, 1934; Shor, 1992; Sohng, 1995), focusing on process rather than on an experimental method measuring cause and effect.

Action research is gestaltist in origin, meaning that rather than study a single variable within a complex system, the entire system within its natural environment (gestalt) is considered (Dickens & Watkins, 1999; Foster, 1972). Recently, a new understanding of the process of organizational change has emerged. Change is not implemented from the top down or bottom up, but is participative and can be identified by investigating patterns of behavior of the system over time (Senge et al., 1994).

My research operates from a general systems-theory perspective, a holistic view of the world. This perspective, according to Greenwood and Levin (1998), has been applied to physics, chemistry, biology, and engineering, and more recently to the analysis of organizational behavior (Argyris, 1985; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Flood & Romm. 1996). Systems thinking challenges assumptions about how the world works by helping expand understanding, allowing one to see how the parts work together, and how the relationships between the elements in a system influence behavior (Sweeney, 2001).

Participatory-action research, a qualitative method, is especially appropriate to answer questions regarding the conditions and characteristics of organizational change in a community association, especially given the work-imbedded nature of the doctoral program at Andrews University. Conceptualizing knowledge development and learning are emergent processes. Participatory-action research moves the discussion from a theoretical and methodological perspective to center on conditions and actions, thus
helping one to recognize the value of research processes. Implicit in the approach is the belief that research functions not only as a tool for knowledge production but also as a means for the education and development of consciousness as well as mobilization for action (Babbie, 2001; Gaventa, 1991).

Action research often starts with a fuzzy question and methodology, with succeeding cycles adding clarity (Dick & Mahony, 1993). Throughout the research period, June 2001 through May 2002, my investigative process was to review meeting minutes, research and write about the organization's history and its relevant cultural environments, and examine my journal notes. I sought to identify patterns of behavior and understand organizational changes that took place.

What emerged was a natural delineation of three distinct cycles defined by major organizational events or meetings. The first cycle began following the spring planning retreat on June 15, 2001, and ended with the strategic planning “gatherings” on October 13, 2001. Cycle two began immediately following the gatherings, October 14, 2001, to March 2, 2002, when a significant budget committee meeting took place. I determined cycle three, March 3, 2002, to May 10, 2002, to be from the budget committee meeting to the decision by the board to hold the May 28, 2002, meeting where the board proposed four organizational options to the membership. Those were (a) to maintain affiliation with AAUW but restructure significantly, (b) to dissolve and affiliate with a different women's group, (c) to dissolve and form an entirely new organization, unaffiliated with any existing organizations, or (d) to dissolve.

For ease in comprehension and greater understanding, I segmented the decisions made within each cycle into the eight organizational themes: knowledge structure.
leadership, communication, learning, success, risk taking, goal setting, and organizational culture. I then determined whether the decisions made during each cycle were from a member-centered or an organization-centered paradigm.

In summary, primarily I chose participatory-action research because it is similar to what organizational consultants Cecilia McMillen and Annie McKee (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002) called the process of dynamic inquiry. They defined dynamic inquiry as a "method of discovery [that] uncovers an organization's emotional reality—what people care about . . . the truth about their organization" (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 198).

**Definitions of Key Terms**

The following terms are defined in the context in which they are used in this dissertation.

**Chaotic:** "Any self-organizing and governing, adaptive, non-linear, complex organism, organization or system exhibiting behavior characteristics of both order and chaos" (Hock, 2002, p. 305).

**Closed community:** According to the theory of community, a closed community is a value-creating entity where the local social life is bounded and sufficiently intense that strong norms and traditions are generated (Milofsky, 1988b).

**Culture:** What we call the socially patterned human thought and behavior, originating with 19th century British anthropologist Edward Tylor (Barthorpe, Duncan, & Miller, 2000).

**Evolution:** A process of continuous change in some direction; it applies to the interaction between species or organisms and their environments.
**Feminism:** The theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes on behalf of women's rights and interests, often founded in their experiences of oppression and desire for awareness and justice.

**Frankenmuth:** A mid-Michigan city founded in 1845 by a group of 15 German-Lutheran missionaries who came to this area for the purpose of teaching Christianity to the Chippewa Indians. *Franken* is the province from which the settlers came, and *Muth* means courage in German. Thus, the name Frankenmuth means courage of the Franconians.

**Nonprofit:** An organization whose primary purpose is not focused on making a profit. The type of organization includes volunteer and civic groups, social associations, and governmental agencies.

**Organizational change:** "An empirical observation of difference in form, quality, or state over time in an organizational entity. The entity may be an individual's job, a work group, an organizational strategy, a program, a product, or the overall organization" (Palmer & Dunford, 1996, p. 1; see also Ford & Ford, 1995; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995).

**Profound or transformational change:** Combines inner shifts in people's values, aspirations, and behaviors with shifts in processes, strategies, practices, and systems. In profound change there is learning; the thinking that produced the change strategies, structures, and systems also changes (Senge et al., 1999).

**Volunteerism:** The practice of volunteering, people giving freely of their time and resources in the service of others.
Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 lays the foundation for this study. It begins with the background of the study and then provides more detail by identifying the problem statement, purpose, and importance of the study, methodology, and definitions of key terms.

Chapter 2 contains information about the cultural environment, beginning with an introduction explaining the effect of culture on organizational change. The chapter is then broken into four main sections: AAUW, the community of Frankenmuth, AAUW of Frankenmuth, and transformation and change. The first section gives an overview of the parent organization, including subsections explaining the organizational history, corporations, membership benefits, public policy, and the AAUW of Michigan. The second section focuses on the community of Frankenmuth, with subsections discussing its history, values and beliefs, and school district. The third main section tells about the Frankenmuth area branch of the AAUW, with subsections about the mission and purpose of the organization, membership; programs, fundraising, and dues; and its relationship with the parent organizations. The last section of chapter 2 focuses on transformation and change, including information on significant societal changes, the impact of feminism, organizational change, volunteerism and leadership, and change leadership. A summary serves to connect themes and tie the chapter together.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the methodology of the study. The chapter begins with an introduction and a description of the research methodology. The design of the study, ethical considerations, pertinent assumptions and researcher bias, limitations, validity, and generalizability of the study findings are set forth.

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Chapter 4 focuses on the research question. Following an introduction, there is an overview of the research evidence. The findings are divided into three key cycles or time periods. The final section, research results, explores the eight primary themes explaining the shift from an organizational-focus to a member-focus.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of conclusions drawn from the study findings, recommendations, and a discussion about possible future studies. The goal of the chapter is to summarize the value of the paradigm shift that took place and the importance of all organizations moving toward this point of view.
CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH ISSUES

Introduction

In this study I identified the cultural conditions, both organizational and environmental, that influenced the Frankenmuth branch of the AAUW to consider a transformational change. Successful organizations build cohesive cultures around common sets of norms, values, and ideas that create an appropriate focus for doing business (Morgan, 1997). But can they change? Not according to Goman (2002): "Organizations don’t change. People do—or they don’t" (Mistake 1 section). In other words, organizations do change if people do. This idea builds on Isaacs’s (1999) belief that one cannot “manage” change, because the greatest source of change in social systems is learning (Banathy, 2000; Boulding, 1985) and the biggest obstacle to change is past success (de Jager, 2001).

"Relationship is everything when you see the world as a social system" (Senge et al., 1999, p. 141). Kurt Lewin’s work in social psychology in the 1930s and 1940s began the idea of social systems. Other strands of this approach have emerged from gestalt theory, family systems theory, and cultural anthropology (Senge et al., 1999).

"Learning" transpires through our social systems whether we acknowledge and facilitate the process or not. The paradigm, or what is considered the norm, can shift as organization members learn and integrate new ways of thinking and evaluating the world.
The shift can be identified by evaluating the group’s decision-making behavior as it relates to key themes, such as methods of communication, leadership, risk, measurements, and the organizational culture.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the cultural environment, specifically the parent or national AAUW organization, followed by the community of Frankenmuth, the history of the Frankenmuth branch of the AAUW, social change and feminism, and organizational change and leadership. Culture is not a simple phenomenon. It is not something that can be mandated, designed, or created. It is a living, evolving, self-organizing reality that can be shaped and reshaped but not in an absolute way. Looking at the larger system in which the members of the Frankenmuth branch operate provides a framework for understanding how this group has maintained the same organizational structure for 27 years and the factors leading to the consideration of an organizational transformation.

**The American Association of University Women**

The AAUW is a national organization whose mission promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change. In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class. ("Association, " 2002)

Housed in Washington, D.C., this group’s causes include gender-fair education, civil rights, social security, and reproductive choice. The AAUW’s commitment to issues is reflected in public-policy efforts, programs, and diversity initiatives. The
following subsections examine the organization's history, its three corporations, membership benefits, public policy, and the state organization, the AAUW of Michigan.

History of the American Association of University Women

Thirteen years after Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton published their first issue of the *Revolution*, a newspaper dedicated to discussing the oppression of women (Smallcomb, 2001), the AAUW story began. It was a chilly November in Boston in 1881. Boston had a long and proud tradition of intellectual leadership—for its male citizens. Women were largely excluded from this aspect of contemporary life; academic pursuits were tightly reserved for men. A leading physician even declared that education for women was an "abomination" that impaired their physical health. An educated woman, he asserted, would produce malformed offspring (Purcell & Brown, 1982).

Despite such dire predictions, certain educators of the day believed that women were just as fit as men for the rigors of academic life. One such educator was Dr. Tisdale Talbot, dean of the Boston University Medical School and the father of two daughters. Emily Fairbanks Talbot, his wife, was a leader in philanthropic and educational work. Marion, the Talbots' oldest daughter, was one of the first to enroll when Boston University opened a liberal arts college and admitted women (Purcell & Brown, 1982).

Another young woman with academic aspirations was Alice Hayes, a graduate of the relatively new Vassar College. The Hayes family objected strongly to their daughter's search for active employment. One day in 1881 she came to the Talbot home "without formal introduction" and asked to speak with Mrs. Talbot. She had learned of Mrs. Talbot's interest in furthering education for women and wanted to ask for help in finding a tutoring position (Purcell & Brown, 1982).
Mrs. Talbot introduced Alice Hayes to her own daughter, Marion, with whom Alice had much in common. The meeting of these two young women gave Mrs. Talbot an idea. She was well aware that these first college women had graduated into a world that was largely unprepared for them, both occupationally and socially. Why not ask other university women to form an organization that would help them use their higher education? Marion Talbot and Alice Hayes planned the preliminary meeting with Ellen Richards, another Vassar graduate and professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Purcell & Brown, 1982).

In November 1881, 17 young women representing eight institutions—Boston University, the Universities of Michigan and Wisconsin, Cornell, Oberlin, Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley—gathered at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and voted to call a meeting to organize “an association of women college graduates with headquarters in Boston” (Purcell & Brown, 1982, p. 1). Notices of this proposal were sent to alumnae of the eight institutions who lived in New England and New York (Purcell & Brown, 1982).

A total of 65 women attended the organizational meeting held at Chauncy Hall School in Boston on January 14, 1882. Marion Talbot spoke to the assembled women and outlined the types of work she believed the proposed organization could perform. The acting president of Wellesley College, Alice E. Freeman, presented several ideas to the gathering. She suggested that the new association promote higher education for women, assist college-educated women with a “helpful influence” as they pursued various occupations, and help them use the privilege of higher learning for the good of society and for themselves. A constitution was drawn up and adopted, stating that membership in the association would be determined on an institutional, rather than
This comparatively small group of privileged and academically trained women soon asserted itself as a vital force in American Society. An educated woman was still a novelty, but that would change as women attended universities in greater numbers. Among those in the forefront—actively seeking higher learning for women and encouraging those same women to assume new and increasingly responsible roles in society—were the members of the ACA, which eventually became the AAUW (Purcell & Brown, 1982).

In Chicago, a similar group of educated women formed the Western Association of Collegiate Alumnae, organized in December 1883. One of the first actions of this newly formed group was to provide a Bureau of Correspondence to encourage communication among college women in the U.S., Great Britain, and continental Europe. It was “the first printed indication that American university women were seeking an international alliance” (Purcell & Brown, 1982, p. 1). Another notable accomplishment of this association was the establishment of a fellowship fund especially for women scholars. The Western Association made efforts to merge with the older ACA in October 1889 (Purcell & Brown, 1982).

The ACA continued to grow, and in 1884 its constitution was amended to allow the formation of separate units known as branches. Marion Talbot had written into the ACA minutes, “The lusty infant needed not only bigger clothes, but more of them” (Purcell & Brown, 1982, p. 1). Her observation was correct: Washington, D.C., was the first recognized branch, organized in 1884, followed by New York City, Philadelphia, and...
Boston in 1886; Central New York, Minnesota, Chicago, Detroit, and Indiana in 1889; and Cleveland in 1891 (Purcell & Brown, 1982).

Angie Warren Perkins, the first woman graduate of Wesleyan College in Connecticut, invited several women to meet in her Knoxville, Tennessee, home to form an organization for women graduates in the South. Seventeen charter members met on a July afternoon in 1903 and formed the Southern Association of College Women (SACW). This Association determined to "devote energy to the Southern educational problems at close range" (Purcell & Brown, 1982, p. 1). Several of the women were already members of the ACA. The new association went quickly to its tasks: encouraging colleges for women to upgrade their standards by offering a 4-year academic curriculum, campaigning actively for compulsory school attendance, and working for social welfare legislation, including child protection laws. Although more than 140 institutions designated as "colleges for women" existed in the South, only two of these offered a full 4 years of academic work (Purcell & Brown, 1982).

In 1917, the first steps toward a merger of the ACA and the SACW began. The work and ideals of the two associations had become nearly identical, and there was some overlapping membership. The Southern Association had already appointed a committee to work with the ACA on general affiliation of the two groups. The union was completed at the ACA convention in April 1921, held in Washington, D.C. A new name was adopted at this meeting, because the term collegiate had little meaning abroad, and the ACA, now including the former Southern Association, became the American Association of University Women (Purcell & Brown, 1982).
The AAUW went international in 1919, when Dean Virginia Gildersleeve of the ACA (now AAUW), together with Dr. Caroline Spurgeon and Professor Rose Sidgewick of Great Britain, helped initiate the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) (Purcell & Brown, 1982). By 1998 IFUW had 67 national federations and 180,000 members worldwide ("Herstory," 2002). Current AAUW global connections include their continued affiliation with the IFUW, the Educational Foundation-sponsored International Symposium and International Fellowships, Bina Roy Partners in Development sponsored by the IFUW, and the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund ("Join AAUW," 2002).

To accommodate members who could not affiliate with a local branch, a "general" membership category was established in 1889. In 1949 this category became "membership-at-large," although most AAUW members join a local branch (Purcell & Brown, 1982). The full list of membership types available includes, (a) member-at-large, (b) student affiliates for undergraduates working toward an associate’s or bachelor’s degree, (c) college/university members for institutions, and (d) branch member. In 2002, the AAUW website ("Join AAUW," 2002) reported that the organization represents 150,000 women and comprises 1,500 communities. Although every state in the country is represented and there are "branches" in various workplaces, on different campuses, and even one on-line, this figure represents a decline of 1.6% from the previous year, "which is better than recent years" (Doster, 2002, p. 5).

When I asked the National Association for a profile of the current membership, Carole Thomas, Manager of the Membership Department, said that, "at present, we do not have good demographic data on the AAUW membership. The most significant
change in our membership profile is that our members are older" (email communication. April 25, 2002). The 2001 Every Member Survey conducted by AAUW supported the aging-membership perception mentioned by Carole Thomas. The average age of respondents to the survey was 60.3 years. The respondents had belonged to the AAUW for an average of 18.7 years. The survey generated 1,655 responses (1,421 by mail and 234 electronically) from 423 branch members, 113 members-at-large, and 5 student affiliates, from 50 states (email communication. April 25, 2002).

Corporations

The mission of the AAUW is to promote education and equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change. This mission is supported through three separate corporations, the Association, the Educational Foundation, and the Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF). These corporations work to support members, provide research, and focus resources on sex discrimination in higher education. What began as a group of women with shared interests and backgrounds has transformed into an enterprise with tentacles reaching out in many directions.

The first of the three corporations is the Association (AAUW), a 150,000-member organization with more than 1,500 branches nationwide. Its primary focus is lobbying and advocating for gender equity. The AAUW works with teachers, administrators, students, and parents to institute gender-fair educational programs in schools; provides leadership training; and promotes multicultural awareness and action. The Association's voice has long influenced legislative debate on critical social issues such as education, sex discrimination, civil rights, reproductive choice, affirmative action, Title IX, welfare

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One current advocacy program is the AAUW voter education campaign, an initiative that uses a nationwide "Get the Facts" fax and email network to educate women voters, mobilize the grassroots, launch organized get-out-the-vote drives, and get more women to the polls. Other programs include ¡Adelante!, a diversity awareness and action program; Sister-to-Sister Summits, a nationwide series of girls' conferences; and Education and Equity: Choices for a Changing World, a portfolio of projects about the new century's many opportunities for women and girls—in work, education, and communities ("Association," 2002).

The AAUW Educational Foundation is the second leg of the AAUW corporation triad. The Foundation provides funds to advance education, research, and self-development for women and to foster equity and positive societal change in the form of pioneering research on girls and education, community action projects, and fellowships and grants for outstanding women around the globe. The Foundation is the largest source of funding exclusively for graduate women in the world; it awards $3 million in grants and fellowships each year. The funding supports aspiring scholars around the globe, teachers and activists in local communities, women at critical stages of their careers, and those pursuing professions in which women are underrepresented. The Foundation funds ground-breaking research; fellowships and grants for outstanding women from around the globe; special awards; vital community-action projects; and symposia, roundtable meetings, and forums. The Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, states that its "cornerstone" has always been the remarkable energy and commitment of AAUW
members, other individuals, corporations, and foundations that make contributions and help raise money for the Foundation's work ("AAUW Educational," 2002).

In "Making an Impact" (2000) the Foundation's Annual Report, the President Sharon Schuster heralded the research and grants and how they help advance the far-reaching goals of the AAUW's founders. Through this widely respected research, the AAUW draws national attention to the problems girls face in school. The topics and types of studies selected show the focus of national efforts. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Third Shift: Women Learning Online (2001) explores why women pursue education; how they balance work, family, and education; and what would make distance learning easier for them. It also makes recommendations for improvements ("Research," 2002).

Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School (2001), is the report of a nationally representative survey conducted by Harris Interactive of 2,064 8th- through 11th- graders that investigated sexual harassment in public schools. The survey findings are compared with the AAUW's original 1993 survey, and differences in responses by gender, race/ethnicity, grade level, and area (urban or suburban/rural) are explored. According to the report, one student in five fears being hurt or bothered in school, and four students in five personally experience sexual harassment ("Research," 2002).

Beyond the "Gender Wars": A Conversation About Girls, Boys, and Education (2001) offers key insights presented during a Foundation symposium of scholars who have studied both girls' and boys' experiences in and out of school. Participants shared
their insights about gender identity and differences, challenged popular views of girls’
and boys’ behavior, and explored the meaning of equitable education for the 21st century.

_A License for Bias: Sex Discrimination, Schools, and Title IX (2000)_ examines
uneven efforts to implement the 1972 civil rights law that protects more that 66 million
students and millions of employees from sex discrimination in schools and universities.
The analysis of non-sports-related complaints filed between 1993 and 1997 pinpoints
problems that hamper enforcement and includes recommendations from Congress, the
Office for Civil Rights, and educational institutions (“Research,” 2002).

U.S. schools do not meet the educational needs of America’s fastest-growing
female minority population, Latinas, according to _Si, Se Puede! Yes, We Can: Latinas in
School (2001)_ commissioned by the AAUW Educational Foundation. This
comprehensive report reviewed the educational status and progress of Latinas in the
United States, exploring the cultural conflicts between Hispanic children and the schools
they attended (“Research,” 2002).

As violent electronic games and dull programming classes turn off more and more
girls to the computer culture, schools need to change the way information technology is
used, applied, and taught in the nation’s classrooms. This is the subject of a new report.
_Tech-Savvy: Educating Girls in the New Computer Age (2000)_ published by the AAUW

The Foundation’s research report _Voices of a Generation: Teenage Girls on Sex,
School, and Self (1999)_ provided comments of roughly 2,100 girls nationwide on peer
pressure, sexuality, the media, and school. The girls were 1997 and 1998 participants in
AAUW teen forums called Sister-to-Sister Summits. The girls’ responses indicated
differences based on their race, ethnicity, and age, and they offered action proposals to solve common problems ("Research," 2002).

Released in June 1999, *Gaining a Foothold: Women's Transitions Through Work and College* examines how and why women make changes in their lives through education. The report profiles three groups—women going from high school to college, from high school to work, and from work back to formal education—using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Findings include an analysis of women's educational decision making, aspirations, and barriers ("Research," 2002).

Released in October 1998, *Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children* is the most comprehensive report on girls and education since the 1992 report, *How Schools Shortchange Girls*. Based on the findings of 1,000 research studies, this report reveals where public schools are failing to meet the needs of girls and outlines recommendations to set all children on a path to high academic achievement ("Research," 2002).

The Foundation again took the lead in educational reform with *Separated by Sex: A Critical Look at Single-Sex Education for Girls* (1998). The foremost educational scholars on single-sex education in Grades K-12 compared findings on whether girls learn better apart from boys. The report, including a literature review and a summary of a forum convened by the AAUW Educational Foundation, challenges the popular idea that single-sex education is better for girls than is coeducation.

Initial research publications include *Working to Succeed in School* (1996), *What's Working for Girls in School* (1995), and *The AAUW Survey on Sexual Harassment in America's Schools* (1993), the first national scientific study of sexual harassment in

Rounding out AAUW's three corporate entities is the LAF. The LAF, the nation's largest legal fund focused solely on sex discrimination in higher education, provides funds and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for sex discrimination in higher education. Since 1981, the AAUW LAF has helped students, faculty, staff, and administrators in colleges and universities challenge discriminatory practices—practices such as sexual harassment, denial of tenure or promotion, pay inequity, and inequality in women's athletics programs. The LAF promotes equity for women in higher education by providing financial support for sex discrimination lawsuits, through case support of existing lawsuits, working to educate the university community about sex discrimination, and improving the conditions through campus outreach. The LAF is a 501(c)(3) organization that works by organizing a network of volunteer attorneys and social scientists who consult with women on legal strategies, resources, and the strength of current and potential lawsuits. The LAF seeks to recognize innovative efforts to improve the climate for campus women through the annual Progress in Equity Award ("AAUW Legal," 2002).

**Membership Benefits**

The National Association provides AAUW branch members with a variety of benefits, including access to the membership directory (in print or electronic format). The increased buying power of a large group allows the AAUW to offer nine quality insurance plans, including a dental plan and a plan specifically tailored to meet the needs
of women. The AAUW also offers members a USA Platinum Visa card, featuring a competitive rate and no annual fee. Also, there are discounts to members on the AAUW research and merchandise, as well as group travel opportunities.

The AAUW offers educational programs that promote gender, race, and class equity and are intended to help members enhance their professional and personal skills. Programs are offered at conventions, in interactive workshops, in print, and on-line. In addition, the AAUW provides a leadership development program designed to give members an opportunity to hone their personal and professional leadership skills. This program entails use of the AAUW’s Leadership Library (located in Washington, D.C.) and serving on one of the AAUW’s local, state, regional, and national boards, committees, and panels (“Join AAUW,” 2002).

The AAUW website declares they are “a woman’s voice in Washington” and claims that their strong voice on Capitol Hill will influence legislation that affects the lives of women and girls. The evidence to this assertion is the AAUW’s more than 150,000 members and branches in 1,500 communities, stating that it “guarantees that your message will be heard” (“Join AAUW,” 2002).

The AAUW says it provides members with “relevant timely news and information” (“Join AAUW,” 2002). This includes the organization’s award-winning magazine, *AAUW Outlook*, which delivers close-ups of the women behind women’s rights, from Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Shirley Chisholm, and Donna Shalala to exceptional women in grassroots America. Further, the AAUW publishes *Get the Facts*—a one-page “alert” that informs members about how congressional proposals affect them and what they can do to make a difference. Another tool is its website, which provides members
with continually updated information on Foundation fellowships, grants (member-only
discount rates), and awards, the latest Foundation research, and links to Congress. Also,
members of the AAUW have access to a password-protected Member Center, where
listservs, bulletin boards, and chatrooms are available ("Join AAUW," 2002).

AAUW's Public Policy

Basic to all of the AAUW's public policy efforts is its understanding that true
equity requires a balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the
community. The AAUW believes in the separation of church and state and supports
constitutional protection of all individuals' civil rights, including the right to privacy. It
opposes all forms of discrimination and supports affirmative action as a remedy for past
discrimination. It affirms a commitment to passage and ratification of the Equal Rights
Amendment (ERA). The AAUW believes that quality public education is the foundation
of a democratic society. It advocates equity, academic freedom, and protection from
censorship, bias-free education, and responsible funding for all levels of education. Also,
the AAUW advocate increased access to higher education, especially for women in

The AAUW promotes the economic, social, and physical well-being of all
persons. It believes that essential to that well-being are an economy that provides
equitable employment opportunities, reduction of poverty, quality dependent care, decent
housing, and quality affordable health care; freedom from violence; and a clean and
healthful environment. Further, it supports public budgets that balance individual rights
and responsibility to community. The AAUW values and is committed to the arts and
humanities, which develop and enhance our pluralistic cultural heritage. It believes that
global interdependence requires national and international policies that promote peace, justice, human rights, sustainable development, and mutual security for all people. It supports a strengthened United Nations and its affiliated agencies. Also, it advocates implementation of the Platform for Action from the 4th World Conference on Women ("Issues, AAUW Public," 2002).

The AAUW's Biennial Action Priorities for federal action are chosen according to the criteria of viability, critical need, strong member support, and potential for distinctive AAUW contribution. The priorities are intended to support a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity; to achieve economic self-sufficiency for all women; and to guarantee equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse society ("Issues, Taking," 2002).

The vast majority of AAUW members responding to the 2001 Every Member Survey believed that AAUW federal public policy mostly (74%) or somewhat (24%) reflected their personal beliefs (email communication, April 25, 2002). They rated the 14 action priorities from the AAUW's 1999-2001 federal public policy program, using a scale from 1 (high priority) to 5 (low priority) to express their beliefs about whether each issue should be an AAUW priority. Table 1 reflects the percentage of members who gave a rating of a 1 (high priority) to each statement:

The evolutionary process of this organization is entering a new phase, as its graying members continue to age. According to Membership Director Carol Thomas, AAUW is working to change the perceptions of members (email communication, April 25, 2002). In an email correspondence on April 25, 2002, Thomas explained the organization's approach to attract new members.
### Table 1

**Percentage of AAUW Members Ranking Public Policy Action Priorities as High (in Percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Priority</th>
<th>High Priority</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate and equitable funding for quality public education for all students</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness in compensation</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs that meet the needs of girls in elementary and secondary education</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice in the determination of one’s reproductive life</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom from violence and fear in home, schools, workplaces, and communities</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs that provide women with education, training, and support for success in the workforce</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equitable access and advancement in employment</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition to the use of public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary education</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigorous enforcement of employment anti-discrimination statutes</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigorous enforcement of Title IX</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for United Nations programs that address human rights and women’s and girls’ concerns</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of women’s health rights</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigorous defense and expansion of civil and constitutional rights</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to quality, affordable dependent care</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"At present, we do not have good demographic data on AAUW membership. . . . Here’s what we wish to project to prospective members based on then and now:“
AAUW Past & Present
Powerful
Well-educated
Insular
Elitist
Leading
Well respected

AAUW Now & Future
Powerful and dynamic
Well-educated and Well-balanced
Inclusive
Diverse
Leading edge
Widely respected

AAUW of Michigan

One of the primary focal points of AAUW of Michigan is on equity for women and girls. I begin this section with information regarding how the state of Michigan relates to the rest of the country in regards to women’s equity issues:

Michigan reflects both the advances and limited progress achieved by women in the United States. Women in Michigan and the United States as a whole are seeing important changes in their lives and in their access to political, economic, and social rights. However, they by no means enjoy equality with men, and they still lack many of the legal guarantees that would allow them to achieve that equality. Women in Michigan and the nation would benefit from stronger enforcement of equal opportunity laws, better political representation, adequate and affordable child-care, and other policies that would help improve their status. (“The Status,” 2000, p. 1)

The website for the AAUW of Michigan (“Welcome to,” 2002) repeats the mission and diversity statements.

to promote equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change. In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

The Common Vision, stated in its newsletters for the years 1992 through 1997, is that “AAUW of Michigan will be a highly visible, diverse organization, recognized especially for its commitments to equity for women and girls and to improving public education.”

The Detroit Branch, founded in 1889, was the first branch in the state.
The AAUW of Michigan was not formed until 1922, when nine branches were established; therefore, 2002 marks the 80th anniversary of the organization. It presently has approximately 3,257 members in 53 branches and eight districts (“February Count.” 2002). There are currently two members-at-large, down from 97 in fiscal year 1996/97 (“Welcome to.” 2002).

The membership count from February 1, 2002, indicated that the 53 Michigan branches range in size from 1 member in Lake Orion-Oxford to 296 in Birmingham. The average Michigan branch has 62 members, with a median of 42 people. The state lost 10% of its 3,275 total members in 2001. This is the continuation of a downward trend, as the rate of change from 1999 to 2002 decreased by 14.5%. In her 2000/2001 Annual Report, Membership Vice President, Laurel Howe Plagens, provided some insight to the membership decline. She stated, “Ailing branches, compounded by the over-busy lives that committed women lead today, continue to contribute to the concerns of the membership office, although ‘comeback’ branches like Detroit continue to give us hope” (Plagens, 2001, p. 22).

The state organization is a structural blend of national and local branches. Like the national, it has a hierarchical structure with elected officers; focusing on public policy and working as a liaison with state political issues that relate to the mission of the organization. The board consists of eight people, and an additional eight people are appointed directors. Most, if not all, state board members and directors tend to be officers of their branch organizations as well. Similar to branch officers, they are unpaid volunteers, though they do receive reimbursement for meals and mileage for attending state functions.
The AAUW of Michigan publishes a quarterly newsletter that is sent to all members in the state and a quarterly newsletter, *The Leader*, that is sent to branch presidents. The information in these publications focuses primarily on national initiatives, upcoming AAUW conferences and workshops, and branch updates.

The state organization does not do any fundraising, other than small raffles and table-display sales, which raise funds that are sent directly to the national organization. The Financial Report (2001) shows a total budget of $32,563. Membership dues, which amounted to $28,467, furnished the majority of the income. The top expenses were publications ($7,446), organizational ($6,805), state services office ($5,359), and conferences and officers' expenses ($2,119).

The state branch coordinates periodic conferences and programs, in an attempt to share ideas and bring members together for networking and new learning experiences. For example, the branch was an active participant in the June 2002 Great Lakes Regional (Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Indiana) Conference entitled "Log on to the Future—AAUW in the 21st Century." The theme was intended to reflect "our organization's quest to accept the challenge of change as we continue to provide a stable and viable group that will attract a diverse membership" (Edell-Cotner, 2002, p. 1). As a reference point, as of April 2002, only 21% (55 out of 264) of the branches in the Great Lakes region had websites linked to National's site. Also, there is not a template or universal look to any of the sites, regardless of whether they are representing a state, region, or branch. Regions and districts not only lack a website, there is no mention of the distinction that there are regions or districts on any of the AAUW websites, national, or local.
The 79th Michigan convention included the President’s Report, by Carole Wells (2001), who applauded Michigan as being a “six-star state” (a national AAUW recognition program). She also acknowledged Michigan for being among the top 10 states in terms of contributions to both the National Educational Foundation and the LAF ($120,816 or $37 per capita). In the balance of her report, she explained her role as president and the responsibilities associated with representing the state at various functions and tasks.

In many ways, the AAUW Michigan is a smaller, more local, version of the national organization. Both have a hierarchical structure designed to focus on their organizational goals through traditional budget, planning, and communication systems. This establishes a leadership model for local branches that primarily supports one-way communication, from the top down. This also creates a culture, and accompanying organizational systems, defined by past experiences and ways of thinking.

**The Community of Frankenmuth, Michigan**

A community is best defined as a group of people who, regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds, are able to transcend their differences, enabling them to communicate effectively and openly, working together toward goals identified as being for their common good (“Workshop,” 2002). Community, a set of relationships that are interconnected, is often at the heart of a discussion regarding social capital and civil society. Civil society is a complex mix of businesses, institutions, clubs, and associations that builds in turn on family and community. Civil society can further be defined as an intermediate realm situated between state and household. It is populated by organized groups or associations which are separate from the state, enjoy some autonomy in
relations with the state, and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or
extend their interests, values, or identities (Michigan State University email list, March
13, 2002). Community becomes the vehicle by which people are socialized into their
culture and given the skills that allow them to live in a broader society and through which
the values and knowledge of that society are transmitted across generations.

Frankenmuth City and township, located in Saginaw County, make up a
homogeneous community found in the heart of mid-Michigan. Frankenmuth,
"Michigan's Little Bavaria," was founded by German missionaries in 1845. Descendants
of German immigration form the largest single ethnic group in the U.S. population today,
with Michigan's German population at 28.68% (Rummel, 1999). The community of
Frankenmuth is recognized as Michigan's number-one visitor destination, attracting more
than 3 million visitors a year to a city of only 4,400 residents. Frankenmuth captures the
flavor and fun of Deutschland, with lederhosen- and dirndl-clad citizenry, German music,
food, and festivals. The residents also embody many of the Germanic, Christian values.
A strong work ethic, a commitment to family and education, and faith in God define the
dominant culture of the community (Rummel, 1999).

A community is multifaceted in its impact. The following description provides a
historical perspective of the founding of Frankenmuth, the values of community leaders,
and the strategic plans and visions of both the business community and the school
district. These aspects of the Frankenmuth community are directly linked to the purpose
and mission of the Frankenmuth AAUW. Understanding this environmental culture
provides insight into the accepted norms of the members of the community, including
many members of the Frankenmuth AAUW.
Frankenmuth's History

In 1840, a German missionary named Frederick Wyneken wrote an appeal for help to all Lutherans in Germany, telling them of the hardships of German pioneers in his region and of their lack of pastors, churches, and schools. This appeal struck the heart of Wilhelm Loehe, pastor of the country church in Neuendettelsau, Mittelfranken, Kingdom of Bavaria. Loehe was a popular and influential preacher because of his strict adherence to church doctrines at a time when rationalism was more commonly preached. He organized a mission society, which is still operating today, and began training teachers and pastors for work in the United States. His idea, formulated in 1844, was an experiment to send a mission congregation both to give spiritual comfort to the German pioneers in the Midwest, specifically the Saginaw Valley, and to show the native Indians in the area "Wie gut und schön es ist Jesus zu sehen" (How good and wonderful it is to see Jesus) ("Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce," 2002).

Loehe wrote the pastor of a Swabian settlement in Michigan to recommend a site for his mission colony. He approved the location along the Cass River in Michigan, naming it Frankenmuth. The German word Franken represents the Province of Franconia in the Kingdom of Bavaria, and the German word Muth means courage. thus the city name Frankenmuth means "courage of the Franconians." Thirteen people, mostly farmers from the area around Neuendettelsau (eight were from Rosstal), volunteered to form the colony. Loehe selected Pastor August Craemer, a graduate of Erlangen University who was, in 1844, teaching German in Oxford, England, to train to be the mission colony's pastor and leader ("Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce," 2002).
The colonists had meetings during the 1844-45 winter to discuss the founding of their colony and to set down their congregation's constitution. It defined the colonists' responsibilities to each other and the church, and it outlined the colony's government. Frankenmuth was to be an exclusively German-Lutheran community, and the colonists pledged to remain loyal to Germany and faithful to the German language ("Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce," 2002).

In 1846, a second group of about 90 emigrants journeyed to Frankenmuth. These colonists also bought land and began to clear the trees and build homes. Many of them would lead in the development of St. Lorenz Church and especially the business community of Frankenmuth. A log church was completed by December 26, 1846. The town developed about a mile east of the church and initial settlement in 1847, where a dam and mill were built on the Cass River ("Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce," 2002).

Encouraged by the success of the Frankenmuth settlement, Pastor Loehe also organized three other colonies in Michigan. About 22 families founded Frankentrost, about 6 miles north of Frankenmuth, in 1847. Loehe's purpose was not to establish another mission colony, but rather to cluster German Lutherans together in Michigan. Frankenlust, 22 miles north of Frankenmuth, was settled in 1848 for the same reason as Frankentrost. Loehe's fourth colony, started in 1850, had a different purpose: to help poor and/or unmarried Germans lead new and better lives. Frankenhilf, called Richville today, is about 9 miles northeast of Frankenmuth. Originally, Loehe planned it as an industrial center for high employment, but farming prevailed after the forests were cleared ("Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce," 2002).
Immigration continued through the end of the 19th century as friends and relatives joined the earlier settlers in Michigan. Many were craftspeople and businesspeople who continued to ply their trades in their new home, helping Frankenmuth to establish a reputation for its flour, saw, and woolen mills. Beer, cheese, and sausage were also produced, and a half dozen hotels served travelers. Agricultural and self-sustaining businesses were the norm ("Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce." 2002). Today, in 2002, many of these same family-owned businesses are still providing goods and services to the residents and visitors to the Frankenmuth community.

Johann Georg Rummel (1895/1988) identified the characteristics of Frankenmuth’s original settlers as perseverance, dependability, trustworthiness, and honesty. Rummel also identified the original settlers as being reliable, courageous, faithful, and loving. It was dedication to service to others and the thought of serving the mission that had inspired the original settlers to leave their German homeland. Rummel mentioned in his writings that after 50 years those congregational rules of order planned at the beginning still existed with few exceptions in Frankenmuth. Rummel’s final wish presented in his writings was that “generations to come, will always take care that German churches and schools and the German language, German customs and all the German virtues, are cherished and esteemed” (Rummel, 1895/1988, p. 57).

Zehnder (1970) provided descriptions of Frankenmuth’s original settlers and of life in Frankenmuth up to the 1970s. He found the Frankenmuth people to be deeply patriotic and believing that God is a God of Order. A testimony to this can be found in the community regulations, which clearly spelled out the rules and responsibilities of members of the community. Among the many obligations and privileges listed was that.
anyone wishing to become a member of the community had to be baptized and confirmed. They must lead a Christian life and be engaged in an honorable occupation. Residents of the community were encouraged to know the people they worked with, be at peace with themselves, support the weak, be patient toward each other, and see that no person intentionally rendered evil on another. They were also encouraged to “follow that which is good, rejoice, pray without ceasing and be thankful, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (Zehnder, 1970, p. 154). In his conclusion, Zehnder (1970) stated, “The character of the people determines the character of a community.

Frankenmuth, Michigan is a community with character” (p. 286).

*Living With Jesus* is the most recent published book on Frankenmuth’s history. Pastor Deterding (1995) of Frankenmuth’s St. Lorenz Church wrote this book in celebration of St. Lorenz Church and Frankenmuth’s 150th year celebration. He confirmed the ideas, opinions, and characteristics that Zehnder had mentioned. The faith in God, *Gemuetlichkeit*, community pride, and hard-work ethic that were integral to the beginning of Frankenmuth still exist in Frankenmuth today. Deterding noted that the Christian mission of the community had remained unchanged and that each individual person was a significant part of the whole community.

“In God we trust. United we stand” (“City of Frankenmuth,” 2002) proclaims the website for the city. The city and township of Frankenmuth are home to six churches: Blessed Trinity Catholic Church, Frankenmuth Bible Church, Inter-faith Ministries, St. Lorenz Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod), St. John’s Lutheran Church (Wisconsin Synod), and United Methodist Church. The founding church, St. Lorenz, boasts a
membership exceeding the number of city residents—more than 5,000 baptized members for a city of 4,400 residents (Rummel, 1999).

Frankenmuth Today and Its Values

Frankenmuth is marketed as “Michigan’s Little Bavaria.” Business leaders work to promote the German cultural experience, which is reflected in festivals and events, German language church services, and the Bavarian architecture found throughout the town. Frankenmuth continues to prosper through maintaining a balance of tourism, agriculture, industry, and professional trades. The city of Frankenmuth received the Community of Economic Excellence Certificate of Merit award from the State of Michigan in 1997. This award is given for outstanding efforts in economic development and contributing to a better future for Michigan.

Housing in Frankenmuth ranges from 100-year-old residences in the historic district to contemporary homes in newly developed subdivisions, all of which are well maintained and groomed. The average state equalized value (SEV, 50% of market value) of homes in Frankenmuth is $52,000. The SEV of property in the city of Frankenmuth had grown to an estimated $149 million in 1995. This consisted of approximately 57.4% residential property, 36.6% commercial, 3.9% industrial, and 2.1% other categories. The city property tax millage stands at 8.6 mills (Rummel, 1999).

The strategic plan and the values and beliefs of the Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau provide evidence that the Judeo-Christian principles established by Frankenmuth’s founders remain alive today:

The Vision of the Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau is that Frankenmuth will continue to build on the solid foundation our forefathers have established. Our community will be seen as progressive and
growth-oriented, yet will maintain the cooperative atmosphere of a small town. We will remain Michigan's #1 visitor attraction and promote the community's Bavarian heritage. "Hospitality and friendliness" will be words most frequently used to describe us. We will continue to provide those living and doing business in our community with the highest quality of life possible. Those that live in and visit Frankenmuth will recognize that our community is clean, safe and attractive. We will develop and enhance our strong education system, and with growth, provide opportunities for our youth to remain and prosper in our community. An excellent infrastructure will support our vision for growth and the maintenance of our high quality of life. We will build alliances with surrounding communities to promote good will and prosperity.

Our strong spiritual beliefs, heritage, family values, high morals, and ethics guide both the community and our organization. Cooperation between business, industry, education, government, community service organizations and the community at large is key to ensuring our future. A spirit of pride and willingness to serve our community is essential. We believe in genuinely caring for and showing hospitality and friendliness to all that live in and visit our community. We believe that we must give back to our community to ensure its growth and prosperity. A strong work ethic and desire to succeed are necessary. The quality of life we enjoy in our community is directly related to a strong economic base, the physical attractiveness of our community, the education provided to our youth, and our ability to be innovative and progressive. We believe that we must continually improve services to our members. The Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau provides leadership to the community, and our actions must support our beliefs and values. (Frankenmuth Chamber, as cited in Rummel, 1999, pp. 16-17)

Beyond the business community, represented by the Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau, it is important to investigate how members of the community feel about Frankenmuth. Do business owners and residents share common principles and values? A community opinion survey of Frankenmuth residents was conducted in 1994. One thousand eighty-three questionnaires were delivered, and 899 (or 83%) people responded. Conclusions were as follows: (Rummel, 1999, p. 20; see also Ahlberg, 1994):

1. All citizens are very satisfied with living in Frankenmuth.
2. Increasing citizens' satisfaction and sense of community will affect their involvement, increase membership affiliations, and increase newcomers' sense of community.
3. Strong support exists for maintaining German heritage.
4. Strong support exists for the community vision.
5. Appearance, safety, and roads were listed as strengths of the physical environment.
6. Local business people, schools, chamber of commerce, external cooperation, and honoring the past were listed as strengths of the human environment.
7. Parks, schools and education, Wickson library, local history, utilities, refuse collection and emergency services were listed as strengths of public and private services.
8. Tourism and how Frankenmuth compares to other communities were listed as strengths of economic development and other aspects.

More recently Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce President Annette M. Rummel (1999) conducted a study to identify attributes of the Frankenmuth community. She found that the values and beliefs associated with Christian teaching and a hard work ethic were the characteristics most commonly identified with Frankenmuth's success. Interview participants chose the response, "religious affiliations/churches," more than 2 to 1 over the second highest response. Work ethic ranked within the top 10 responses. Responses also included within the top 10 were: positive atmosphere, pride in the community, outstanding school system, volunteerism, clean, caring neighbors, friendly and safe.

Testimonies to Rummel's findings are the six Christian churches offering services to residents and visitors. In addition to the churches, Frankenmuth is home to several civic organizations that provide volunteers for festivals and special events, and continually give back to the community. Volunteer opportunities listed on the Chamber of Commerce's website ("About Frankenmuth," 2002) are: the AAUW, American Business Women's Association, American Legion Auxiliary, American Legion Post 150, Blessed Trinity Men's Club, Camp Kiwanis, City Beautification, City of Frankenmuth, Civic Events Council, Conservation Club, Frankenmuth Aeromodelers Club, Frankenmuth Archers, Frankenmuth Athletic Association, Frankenmuth Boy Scout Troop.

The preceding list does not include the opportunities in the surrounding Saginaw area, the schools and colleges, the programs offered through the schools such as band and the recreational and sport opportunities, or the programs offered by Frankenmuth Community Education. In addition, 14 medical and dental offices serve the community, no doubt providing opportunities for residents to be part of professional and trade associations. Last, the city itself offers opportunities for people in the area to participate on several boards and commissions, to volunteer with the fire department, or help with activities relating to sports and recreation.

As recently as May 2002, key Frankenmuth community leaders began to explore the idea of supporting a Principle-Centered Community Initiative, based on the elements of Franklin Covey’s Seven Habits for Highly Effective People. A principle-centered community is one with a shared purpose, vision, and sense of unity. It is a community in which individuals and organizations take responsibility for themselves and it values all
community members, seeking to bring out the best in each individual (Franklin Covey Company, 1997).

Frankenmuth School District

Because ensuring educational equity is one of the missions of the Frankenmuth-area AAUW, it is important to look at the mission and values of the Frankenmuth School District. The mission of the district is “to provide each student a fund of knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes, and ethical values with which to understand the world, gain productive employment, and successfully manage the change the future will bring” (“Mission Statement,” 2002).

To accomplish its mission, the Board of Education and administration have identified a common set of values. They are:

1. Commitment to Community—We value the collaboration and communication between our school district and the community. We endeavor to continue a special relationship with the parochial schools in our district. We believe that working together with community members, businesses and churches makes us all better.

2. Devoted Staff—We believe that one of the district’s greatest strengths is its dedicated faculty and staff, who take pride in their professionalism and work collaboratively to improve learning for all students. We seek their input in the decision-making process. We encourage them to live and be involved in our community and to serve as coaches, mentors, sponsors, and advisors.

3. High Expectations—We expect the best from all our students and staff, and we strive to set high standards. The staff believes and demonstrates that all students can succeed and the staff has the capability to help all students to do so. We empower students to excel academically and to participate in extracurricular activities. We value a strong work ethic and believe that there is no substitute for hard work.

4. Fiscal Responsibility—We recognize the importance of being careful stewards of public funds. Our philosophy is to fund a quality education program. We will endeavor to maintain a fund balance sufficient to operate the school district for a period of 80 days.

5. Reputation for Quality—We value our “Tradition of Excellence” and strive to provide first-rate facilities and programs. We are receptive to and encourage new ideas; yet, we are a traditional school system, which does not need to
return to the basics, because we never left them. We believe in providing a well-rounded curriculum that integrates the arts and academics.

6. Respect and Caring—We value a system where students treat staff and one another with dignity and respect. Likewise, the staff treats one another and the students with dignity and respect. The Board of Education is proud of its very special relationship with the Frankenmuth Teachers Professional Organization.

7. Parental Involvement—We believe that when schools work with the family to support learning, children succeed—not just in the classroom but in life. Parents understand and support the school’s mission and have an important role in achieving it.

8. Safe and Orderly Environment—We value an orderly, purposeful, climate free of threat and physical harm. Our school campus is a Drug Free School Zone. ("Mission Statement," 2002)

The value-based information presented in the district’s mission is just one indicator of the dominant community culture. Demographic and economic information about the Frankenmuth School District lends additional insight, creating a picture of what constituents of the Frankenmuth School District look like and what they value.

Frankenmuth Schools have never experienced a strike or work disruption and recently passed a $16 million millage proposal on the first attempt with a vote of 1,631 in support and 793 opposed, unlike many area school districts whose millage attempts suffered multiple defeats near the same time period.

According to the school profile created by the School Evaluation Services (SES) and compiled by Standard and Poors ("Frankenmuth School District," 2002).

Relative to other K-12 school districts in Michigan, Frankenmuth School District (Saginaw County) achieves well-above-average student results with spending that is comparable to statewide levels. Among the student results considered are the district’s MEAP, ACT, SAT, PSAT, and AP scores and corresponding participation rates, as well as graduation and dropout rates. The district’s spending per student is comparable to both the state average and the average of a group of peer districts with similar demographic characteristics. Average operating expenditures per student, moderately above-average teacher salaries, moderately below-average proportion of special education students, well above-average local-source revenue per student, well-above-average taxable property value per student, well above-average district
long-term debt per student, well below-average proportion of economically disadvantaged students.

The district’s graduation rate of 97.8% is well above the state average of 86.6%, and higher than the peer-group average (determined by the SES system based on grades served, enrollment size, proportions of special education and disadvantaged students, and locale type). Statewide, only 8.1% of Michigan’s school districts graduate a larger proportion of students than Frankenmuth does. During the period examined, the district’s graduation rate has shown little net change. This is comparable to the state trend, but counter to the peer trend, which shows an average annual decrease over the same time period ("Frankenmuth School District," 2002).

The district’s dropout rate of 0.6% is well below (more favorable than) the state average of 3.6%, and lower than the peer-group average. Statewide, only 8.3% of Michigan’s school districts report a lower percentage of dropouts than the Frankenmuth district. Of the district’s 1,276 students in 2000, 10.9% received special education instruction. On a full-time equivalent basis, the district’s special education enrollment is 1.6% of total enrollment, which is moderately below the state average of 3.5% and lower than the peer-group average. During the period examined, the district’s dropout rate and proportion of full-time equivalent special education students has shown little net change. This is comparable to the state and peer trends over the same time period ("Frankenmuth School District," 2002).

The district’s student-teacher ratio of 18.8:1 is moderately above the state average of 17.5:1, but comparable to the peer-group average. During the period examined, the district’s student-teacher ratio has shown little net change. This is comparable to the state and peer trends. The district’s trend reflects an average increase in headcount enrollment
of 16 students per year that is offset by a two-teacher average annual increase in staffing levels over the same time period. The district's student-teacher ratio for basic K-12 instruction of 20.3:1 is comparable to the state and peer-group averages ("Frankenmuth School District," 2002).

The district's taxable property value of $244,113 per student is well above the state average of $141,903, and higher than the peer-group average. During the period examined, the district's per-student taxable property value has increased by an average of 3.1% per year. This is less than the average annual state and peer-group increases over the same time period. In addition, the district's median household income of $51,589 is well above the state average of $40,562, but lower than the peer-group average. Statewide, 17.8% of Michigan's school districts have higher median household incomes than the Frankenmuth district ("Frankenmuth School District," 2002).

The proportion of Frankenmuth students who receive free or reduced-price lunches is 4.0%. This proportion is well below the state average of 28.9%. Statewide, only 2.4% of Michigan's school districts report lower proportions of economically disadvantaged students. During the period examined, the district's proportion of economically disadvantaged students has shown little net change. This is comparable to the state and peer-group trends over the same time period ("Frankenmuth School District." 2002).

The community's proportion of lone-parent households with children is estimated to be 6.0%. This proportion is well below the estimated state average of 9.8%. and lower than the peer-group average. Last, the proportion of adult residents in the community with at least a bachelor's degree is estimated to be 26.8%. This is well above the
estimated state average of 16.1%, and higher than the peer-group average ("Frankenmuth School District," 2002).

Communities are value-creating entities (Milofsky, 1988b) where both individuals and organizations are rewarded for actions and behaviors subscribing to community norms. Religion has been defined as a belief system that includes the idea of the existence of an eternal principle that has created and governs the world, one that controls its destinies or intervenes in the natural course of its history. Believers understand this eternal principle—whether a God or a powerful idea—to be the explanation of history, the key to all knowledge, and the guide to the conduct of everyday behavior (Rose & Rose, 2000). Frankenmuth is a community that is committed to the Judeo-Christian beliefs, values, and principles adhered to by its founding fathers. These beliefs manifest themselves in a variety of behaviors, but for the purposes of this study it is important to recognize Frankenmuth’s strong dominant culture and its potential effect on a local community organization.

The Frankenmuth Area Branch of the AAUW

On February 12, 1975, the first organizational meeting of the Frankenmuth chapter of the AAUW took place. Karen VanHine, a past member of the Northville AAUW branch, and Mary Linn Hoffmann, a past member of the Saginaw AAUW branch, started the initiative ("American Association," 1996b). The Frankenmuth branch formed at a time considered the “resurgence of feminism” (Smallcomb, 2001, p. 4). Although historically the 1970s may not be remembered as a decade of activism, it was the period when feminism permeated the American culture. The media helped spread the word, both positive and negative, increasing awareness of women’s roles and their
endeavors to overcome oppression by remedying injustices (Smallcomb, 2001).

According to Levine (1995),

The women drawn to AAUW during the 1970s represented a new generation of feminists and an expanded constituency for women's organizations. If anything separated AAUW from its historical roots, it was this fact. . . . Throughout the years, AAUW's unique contribution to the women's movement has been its focus on equity in education. . . . Nothing could be more mainstream, after all, than the belief that education provides the key to equality in American life. (p. 172)

In the 1970s, more American women had college degrees, were employed, and pursued professions than at any time in the past. This change had profound implications for the culture of the women's movement, the issues on which feminist organizations focused, and the strength of women's demands. Even with this change in constituency, however, the fundamental nature of the AAUW's feminism remained consistent. Members continued to oppose hierarchies based on sex, to identify with a female-centered organization committed to advocating women's rights, and to focus on education as a means of achieving equity (Levine, 1995).

In this section I describe significant events and relevant data of the Frankenmuth area AAUW branch from its inception in 1975 through May 10, 2002, to better understand the conditions that led members of the Frankenmuth AAUW branch to hold a pivotal organizational meeting on May 28, 2002. The discussion is divided into subsections on the Frankenmuth branch's mission and purpose; membership; programs; fundraising and dues; and its relationship with the parent organizations, national and state.
Mission and Purpose of the Organization

The women who began the Frankenmuth branch of AAUW did so because “AAUW enables university women to continue their own intellectual growth, to further the advancement of women and to discharge the special responsibility to society of those who have enjoyed the advantages of higher education” (“American Association,” 1996b). Over time, the organizational mission was adapted to the needs of its members, but it always maintained the same core values. For example, the goals listed in the 1998-99 membership directory were:

Maintain the momentum developed in recent years; Fund scholarships for girls and women, particularly girls in non-traditional fields and women who are continuing an interrupted education and thirdly, Nurture the Branch’s partnerships with the Wickson Memorial Library and with local Girl Scout troops. (“1998-1999 Frankenmuth,” 1998)

Following the spring 2000-2001 strategic planning session, the goals of the Branch appearing in the directory were:

Provide opportunities to learn about women on a global scale, to increase understanding and effect societal change. Enhance partnership with Wickson Memorial Library. Strengthen relationship with and support area educational community. Increase members’ participation in programs. Increase local visibility and image of AAUW and Frankenmuth Branch. Recruit new members and aim for diversified membership. (“2000-2001 AAUW,” 2000)

The minutes from the June 14, 2001, planning retreat reflect an awareness that the core group of members were growing older and that the organization must try to meet their needs as well as those of younger members (Bassett, 2001d). That discussion was the basis for the August member newsletter stating, “The planning retreat discussion led us to focus this year’s meetings and programs on Transitions. Networking and Mentoring” (Kehn, 2001, p. 3).
The group held three brainstorming meetings called “gatherings” in October 2001. These meetings were held to provide insight and gather information relating to membership needs as well as strategic organizational elements such as strengths, weaknesses, and suggested action plans. Following the meetings, I compiled the data and presented it to the board as

... an attempt to provide a place to begin discussing the viable options currently available to us as a branch as means of working towards our mission in a productive, responsible and proactive manner. The focus is on “being” not just “doing.” Each goal is intended to be specific, achievable, and results-oriented. You may notice that the measurements range from the behavior, such as attitudes, to more pragmatic suggestions, such as attendance at meetings. Keep in mind the following guideposts:

The AAUW Mission is to promote Equity for all women and girls, Lifelong education and Positive societal change. This means focusing on eligible members as our customers, graduates who hold a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited institution recognized by the International Federation of University Women (IFUW). Undergraduates enrolled in a regionally accredited educational institution shall be eligible for student affiliation. Our customers value education with a focus on supporting the area educational community, the diversity of individual members, and coming together for shared purposes.

GOALS

1. Identify strengths, resources and common interests of existing members
2. Improve communication with members
3. Improve communication with community
4. Promote organizational focus as Frankenmuth area educational advocate
5. Review budget and dues structure. (“AAUW Frankenmuth,” 2001)

The next section begins with the people involved in the organization, the members of the Frankenmuth AAUW. The subsection Programs, Fundraising, and Dues, which follows the membership section, details the application of the organizational mission explained above.
The first actual meeting of the Frankenmuth branch took place on September 23, 1975 ("American Association," 1996a). The Frankenmuth News published an article about the group's early activities, including its first informal meeting to recruit members, its plan for delegates to attend an upcoming state seminar, and the fact that Chairman VanHine planned to attend a national AAUW meeting. The article mentioned the group's connection with 190,000 national AAUW members ("Mrs. VanHine," 1975). Locally, 23 charter members started the group. By comparison, in 2002 the national association has 150,000 members and the local membership is at 34 women and 1 man. Of those 35 members, five charter members who had helped start the organization were still involved 27 years later, in 2001-2002.

The local association adopted the membership requirements established by the national association, which are that the AAUW is open to graduates who hold a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited institution recognized by the IFUW. In addition, undergraduates enrolled in regionally accredited educational institutions are eligible for student affiliation. With regard to types of memberships, the Frankenmuth AAUW has always consisted of branch members, with a few student memberships donated by the branch to scholarship recipients. The branch has had one member-at-large.

The board formally sought input for changing the membership requirements through a survey appeal in the February 1997 AAUW Frankenmuth member newsletter ("Share Your Thoughts." 1997). A full-page article reminded readers to "keep in mind
the AAUW mission diversity statement and strategic plan main points. In the article, members were asked to

1. Considering the statements (mission, diversity and strategic plan), think about your AAUW branch—how do you view it and how it is perceived in your community. Given these perceptions, what do you think is the best membership requirement, if any, for AAUW?

2. Given the same perceptions you considered in question 1., how would each of the following options impact on your branch’s strategic direction:

Please list your responses to the A) through E) options below.

a. No change to the current membership requirement for a baccalaureate or higher degree
b. Adding a membership category for other degrees (e.g. Associate degree, 3 year RN)
c. Adding a membership category for Community Partners (no degree, but believe in our mission)
d. No educational degree requirement for membership
e. Other (please describe).

Those key points were then printed, which were:

The AAUW mission is to promote equity of all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change.

The diversity statement: In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

The strategic plan was stated as:

Be recognized as the leading advocate for education and equity for all women and girls. Be a catalyst for change that furthers our mission. Be a model of a 21st century women’s organization. Be a racially and culturally diverse organization. Maintain a sound financial base to assure present and future effectiveness. (“Share Your Thoughts,” 1997)

Meeting minutes following this newsletter do not indicate any survey results or change in membership categories. In 2001, the subject of expanding the membership criteria was again discussed at a board meeting. This time, it was suggested that a nonvoting category be created for people who shared the organization’s beliefs, but

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because of the existing membership criteria were unable to join. The discussion did not lead to a motion, but the reference in the August 2001 board minutes shows that the idea was tabled (Bassett, 2001c). The issue was never resurrected.

The mid-1980s were the best years for the Frankenmuth AAUW in terms of the number of members belonging to the club. From 1983 through 1986, membership was in the low 50s. Then a period of gradual decline started, with the fewest number of members, 21, belonging in 1992. Since then, the membership roster has reflected little variation in the number of members or changes in individual members belonging to the group. No formal record has been kept of changes in membership, but meeting minutes occasionally refer to moving, lack of time, or a pro-life stance as reasons women discontinued their Frankenmuth AAUW membership.

The national organization suggests that local branches appoint a membership Chairperson to the board. For the Frankenmuth AAUW, the membership chair has primarily been responsible for maintaining the membership directory and recruiting new members. Minutes and newsletters reflect a variety of methods that have been used to increase membership: these include targeted mailings, posting program information, articles in the local newspaper, and membership recruitment brochures. The most recent approach to reaching new members was to change the organization's name from the Frankenmuth branch to the Frankenmuth area branch. After seeking a motion by the membership, the board submitted the necessary paperwork in November 2001. National AAUW approved the change 4 months later, in March 2002 (Bassett, 2002c).

Formal communication with members, such as through a regular newsletter, was an ongoing challenge according to minutes and organizational records. The first
newsletter appeared in 1980, but in subsequent years there was not always someone in
this volunteer position. A person in another voluntary board position, public relations
Chairperson, was responsible for an indirect method of communication. This branch
representative submitted press releases to local media about programs open to the
community, fundraising events, and donations made to community organizations. The
advent of email also facilitated communication, but some members did not have access
and others did not check it regularly enough for it to be an efficient communication
method. As of 2002, the Frankenmuth AAUW has not maintained an Internet presence
via its own website.

The national AAUW garnered media headlines in 1987 with its decision to allow
men to join the organization. Local Frankenmuth branch members supported the
proposal and were quoted in the newspaper as saying they thought men could aid in the
battle for equality (Wickham, 1987). In 2001, the Frankenmuth branch recruited its first
male member. Member demographic characteristics other than gender are not available,
although historical archives provide some insight. The profile of a typical Frankenmuth
AAUW member, both past and present, is Caucasian, middle to upper class, and married,
widowed, or maiden. It is noteworthy that many AAUW members share similar interests,
as well as memberships, outside of their connection through AAUW. Frankenmuth is a
small community, a one-locally-owned-grocery-store town. Many AAUW members
belong to other community civic organizations and area churches, or meet socially with
other AAUW members as friends.

The Frankenmuth AAUW does not require members to participate in activities to
maintain membership; therefore, members may show their support solely through paying
dues. A notation in the 1981 minutes reflected concerns about the lack of participation in
the pending wreath sale because there were “so many job holding members” (“American
Association,” 1981a). This same year’s board minutes reflected difficulty in securing a
simple majority at board meetings (“Board Meeting,” 1981). Ten years later, in 1991, the
minutes stated concerns about the lack of membership participation at meetings:

There was a discussion relative to whether there were rules in the by-laws stating
whether members should attend and participate in fund raising in order to remain in
the organization. There [are] no such rules. Beth suggested for us to call prospective
members and take them to a meeting. (Radwick, 1991a)

The first discussion regarding the need for a consistent meeting location occurred
in 1984 (Neer, 1984a). This again was mentioned in 1991 (Radwick, 1991b) and 2001
(Bassett, 2001a). As membership participation waned, the board tried various meeting
strategies, including the 1991 decision to have only six meetings (Radwick, 1991c).
Another more recent approach was to try holding some meetings on Saturdays in
partnership with the local library. The most recent decision by the board in regard to
establishing a consistent meeting location was the result of input from the 2001
brainstorming gatherings. The members attending those sessions indicated that it was
important to them to have a regular meeting location, day of the month, and time—even if
they were unable to attend the association’s meetings.

Since its inception, the Frankenmuth AAUW has modeled the hierarchical
structure established by the national AAUW for its branches. The design includes an
elected board of directors (positions set by the national organization), appointed officers,
and committee chairs to manage the organizational requirements. In accordance with the
by-laws, the board and officers are the decision-making body of the organization.
In a letter in the January 1991 membership newsletter, President Helen Dorcey talked about branch goals and the importance of "offering something through our membership that is important to local college educated women who are trying to divide time between family, job, church, further education, etc." (p. 1). She suggested that members share their ideas of "how we can make our branch most important to you." The specific results of her inquiry are not known, but they may have led to the notation in the September 4, 1991, meeting minutes: "The Frankenmuth branch of AAUW will stay in existence this year. The amount of participating this year will determine whether the branch stays in existence for next year" (Radwick, 1991c).

Programs, Fundraising, and Dues

In addition to the annual social event (winter holiday party) and fundraisers (art fair and wreath sale), the Frankenmuth branch has planned and presented a variety of programs throughout its 27-year history. Archives show that the majority of these program meetings have focused on topics relating directly to the local Frankenmuth community. The group periodically has sponsored programs featuring information about women's broad: issues with a national or international focus.

The first big official project for the young Frankenmuth AAUW branch began when members searched for something they could support both financially and with people-power. They selected Academic Track, both because it was "new to our area as was our young branch, [and] because it fit with the AAUW purpose so well. . . . We felt the project would grow as would our branch" (Hoffman, 1982). In 1980 – 1981 the first Academic Track meet was held in Frankenmuth. Academic Track competition is an attempt to offer all students, whether physically endowed or not, an opportunity to
experience the thrill of interscholastic competition on a team basis. Two or more teams
compete in academic subjects ranging from art to mathematics.

Academic Track at Rittmueller Middle School continues today, although it is no
longer sponsored or staffed by the AAUW. The local group singly organized and ran the
program until 1988, when the group did not believe it had sufficient membership depth to
cover the needs of three academic track meets and sought help from the Parent and
Teacher Involvement Association (Robertson, 1988). Organizational records indicate
that the annual donation ranged from $1,140 to $500 and back to $1,000. In 2001, the
school district designated funds to underwrite the program.

At the Frankenmuth branch’s 20-year anniversary in 1996, a *Frankenmuth News*
article stated that the branch
dedicated themselves to serving the Frankenmuth community through educational
projects. These projects included: partial funding and assistance to the public school
Academic Track program, local scholarships to local women who are continuing
their higher education after taking a work or family break, contributions to the
AAUW Educational Foundation Projects, contributions to the AAUW Legal
Advocacy Fund, and contributions to the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund for Women and
Girls. The local branch also contributed to the Frankenmuth community through:
their sponsorship of the Art Fair held every August, their sponsorship of girls and
boys to science camp in the summer, their support of educational programs at the
Historical Museum, and their most recent partnerships established with the Wickson
Memorial Library and the local Girl Scouts. The Branch has also volunteered their
services at the Bavarian Festival. (“American Association,” 1996a)

It is important to this study to note where records indicate that initiatives were
brought to the board but not implemented. At the January 12, 1981, board meeting, the
secretary’s minutes state that charter member “Judy Keller spoke about the embarrassing
ratio of men to women in Frankenmuth governmental bodies. She expressed the need for
a list of qualified women whose names could be suggested for committee positions. No
action was taken” (Handeyside, 1981, p. 2).
In October 2001, Judy Zehnder Keller and I had a similar conversation about the lack of female representation and diversity in the local political arena. In response to her concerns, I gathered lists of those who represented Frankenmuth on city and township boards. The three main decision-making boards, the city and township council and the school board, each had one female member. Of the 24 government boards, not one had a female majority or gender equity. The closest to having an equitable situation was the library board, with two women and three men. The two business-related boards, the 16-member Downtown Development Authority and the 13-member Economic Development Corporation, had the same two women sitting on both boards, but with different groups of men.

In 1980, the Frankenmuth branch began sponsoring the art fair that formerly had been handled by the Wickson Memorial Library. Throughout the years, the branch members made necessary modifications and overcame concerns, continuing to organize and sponsor the art fair until 2001. This event evolved into a low-maintenance, self-perpetuating fundraiser that generated approximately $4,000 annually. In 2000, the Frankenmuth park used by the branch for the art fair became unavailable. Alternative sites did not offer the same amenities, such as access to the center of downtown, shade trees, and so on, leaving both vendors and patrons dissatisfied. The group appointed a committee to review various options, but concluded that they did not have the resources to sponsor the art fair and voted to eliminate the activity.

In 1988, the branch developed a scholarship designed to reward women going back to school after a leave of absence for either family or work. A committee developed the program's parameters, which remain the same in 2002. Although the intervening
years' records show as many as five scholarship recipients. In 1994 it was noted in the minutes that only one application was submitted (Hodge, 1994a). In 2002, two applications were received that met the scholarship conditions.

A second area of regular financial contributions began when the branch made its first donation of books relating to women's issues to the local Wickson Memorial Library in 1984. The effort was intended to reflect "women caring about women" according to the press release by member and future president Marilyn Frahm (1984). Branch members also saw it as a resource center for young women making choices about careers and lifestyles. Since then, the branch has donated enough money to create a designated "women's studies section," which includes many books, a chair, and a lamp. Branch support of the local library has also included partnering on programs for annual women's history month events, bringing in various speakers, and garnering a $1,000 AAUW/National Organization on Disabilities/JC Penny grant on their behalf in 1999.

The Frankenmuth AAUW applied for and received an AAUW 2000/2001 Educational Foundation Community Action Grant for $6,600. Using that money the Frankenmuth branch, in cooperation with the Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce, offered a workshop/retreat entitled "The Glass Is ½ Full" on March 23 & 24, 2001. The workshop/retreat fostered positive thinking and creative problem solving among women and teens from Saginaw, Genesee, Bay, and Tuscola counties of mid-Michigan. The primary goal was to introduce women and teens in mid-Michigan to effective communication and team-building skills through experiential learning. Together, the 50 participants enjoyed sessions with trained facilitators, self-defense educators, and a family therapist in a nurturing and fun environment.
During the week of January 7, 2002, the branch offered a program in cooperation with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to help more than 250 girls from 12 schools learn about engineering and career opportunities. The MIT Women's Initiative Program teaches students about what the field of engineering entails and dispels common stereotypes by encouraging high-school girls to pursue studies and careers in engineering, empowering and motivating them to take the most challenging math and science courses in high school. In addition to generating local press coverage, this effort brought two school districts in the community together to work with the Frankenmuth AAUW.

The first mention of a dues change was in 1984, when dues were raised from $24 to $30, to cover an increase from national ($22 to national, $6 to the division, and $2 to cover local expenses) (Neer, 1984). Except for dues raises in 1993-94 (Hodge, 1993) and 1994-95 (Hodge, 1994a), when no explanations were given, each time the local branch raised dues, it was done to cover an increase from the national and state associations. The local organization became a pass-through agent for dues increases over the years, which occurred in 1990-91 (Robertson, 1990) and 1999-2000 ("Distribution," 1999). By 2000-2001 (Pollick, 2000), the dues had worked their way up to $56 ($39 for national, $9 to the state, and $8 to cover local expenses).

Throughout the archives one notices that each of the dues increases from national prompted discussions about the best method of raising the needed money. Minutes reflect that the board considered whether it should create additional fundraising efforts or pass the increase along to members. The board also discussed the value of national affiliation. For example, minutes from 1998 ("Meeting Minutes," 1998) show a lengthy discussion regarding whether to discontinue local affiliation with the national association.
Alternatives ranged from decreasing the donation to national, requesting that the increase be used for education only, disassociating from national, and joining the Michigan Women’s Studies Association instead.

The Frankenmuth branch’s balance sheets reflect a fiscally sound association throughout the organization’s history, with no debt. Most annual budgets ranged from $4,000 to $8,000. As a non-profit, the majority of the money was given away in the form of monetary donations and scholarships, or used for the organization’s operating expenses. In addition to the national and state fiscal responsibilities, the money raised was earmarked for various local causes and charities. An April 2001 report highlighting 25 years of community support indicated that the Frankenmuth branch made the following donations:

- Scholarships for Women and Girls, $18,623
- Academic Track and other School Gifts, $8,575
- Wickson Memorial Library, $6,347
- Other Community Donations, including the Underground Railroad (Saginaw shelter for abused women), Child Abuse & Neglect Council, City projects such as Band Shell, Trees (following the tornado in 1996), $6,510 for a local total of $40,005.

The AAUW Educational Foundation and Legal Advocacy Fund received approximately $25,000.

("Frankenmuth Branch," 2001)

Relationship With Parent Organizations—AAUW National and State

The Frankenmuth AAUW organizational minutes only occasionally mention actions or opinions regarding the national and state AAUW associations. The most direct involvement in the activities of national and state has been participation by Frankenmuth members at their conventions. According to the archives, at least one local member and in the early years as many as three members represented the branch at national conventions in 1975 ("Mrs. VanHine," 1975), 1983 ("National Convention," 1983), 1987 ("Members of," 1987), and 1989 (Robertson, 1989). Members also attended state

The national association established a "star" recognition program to honor branches that "model excellence" according to their criteria. Each year that the Frankenmuth branch aligned itself with the national program it earned the coveted national recognition, garnering five stars in 1994-95 and 1995-96, six in 1996-97, seven stars in 1997-98, and eight stars in 1998-99. The specific star requirements were listed in the November/December 1998 member newsletter as: Community action (one community project, to include a diversity component), Public Policy (the Candidate Forum and distribution of "Get the Facts" qualifies), Membership (requires a 5% increase or establishment of a student group), Educational Foundation (a contribution of $25/member), Legal Advocacy Fund (donation of $3/member), Visibility (evidence of local media coverage), Leadership (documentation of a strategic plan, goal-setting system, and identification of emerging leaders within the branch). In 2001-02, the Star Program became the 21st Century Recognition Program. The Frankenmuth branch did not pursue this national recognition.

The year 1982 was one with national significance because it marked the most recent defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Many believe that young women
in the 1980s thought that gender issues had been resolved (Kaltreider, 1997; Katz, 1996).

The Frankenmuth AAUW minutes show that national membership "had been static for several years," leading the national association to institute a membership drive to fulfill its need for "financial assistance." This initiative brought in 8,000 new members for the national organization. In this same decade, in January 1984, the association eliminated its toll-free telephone number due to budget cuts, according to an AAUW newsletter.

Frankenmuth President Melinda Downy, who attended the national convention in Boston, described the 1981 platform for AAUW national as follows:

Passage of the Equal Rights Amendment was their first priority. Additionally, delegates agreed to continue their affiliation with the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), continue their support of the right of choice in determining one's reproductive life, continue to strengthen their ties to colleges and universities, and oppose far-right censorship and the thrust of Reagan administration policies. ("American," 1981b)

There was no discussion or mention of the Frankenmuth members' reactions to these national priorities. Because the minutes do not reflect the members' opinions, we can only refer to President Downy's explanation of the organization's platform, which appeared in the Frankenmuth News:

In recent years, says Mrs. Downy, we have fought hard for the adoption and enforcement of Title IX, for equity for women in employment, education, and family, and for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. We have acted through research, study, support of legislation to eliminate discrimination, encouragement of women to participate in public affairs, and programs to educate women to deal more effectively with their own affairs ("Local Branch," 1982).

Frankenmuth AAUW board minutes occasionally state the local group's reaction to a national initiative. In 1986 the group approved of the Civil Rights Restoration Act, "but the Board decided not to pass and take no action due to involvement in other
projects and concern of some members with the abortion issue tie-in” (“American.” 1986).

The board minutes from the June 19, 1990, meeting asked the question, “Should AAUW members be told what to believe?” (Radwick, 1990). The board discussed a letter concerned that the AAUW was becoming involved with women’s issues other than educational ones. The letter stated that the national magazine printed only one side of the issue; the issue discussed was Abortion. “The consensus was that we agree with the article [letter] and AAUW should stick to educational issues” (p. 1).

The July 1999 member newsletter indicated a recruitment problem at the state level. Without a president to elect, the state membership passed a resolution to continue searching until an interested person was found. The article in the Frankenmuth AAUW newsletter went on to say that the lack of a candidate might be a new problem for the state, but it was not new to many groups, including the Frankenmuth branch (Lenard, 1999).

Frankenmuth branch members have never participated or sought to participate on a state or national board. The closest the group came was when I sat on the 2000 state fall conference planning committee, organizing the details for “Woman to Woman in a Changing World.” My primary role was to act as a liaison between the state and our community because the event was held in Frankenmuth. When a state meeting is held in one’s home town, it is customary for all branch members to be involved in the process, volunteering to coordinate registration and local arrangements and provide table decorations. The Frankenmuth board did not believe we had the resources to handle registration, so a nearby branch in Cass City, Michigan, coordinated that part of the
event. Five (out of a possible 45) members of the Frankenmuth branch attended the conference.

At the May 2002 board meeting the members in attendance created a list of pros and cons of belonging to the national association. The pros listed were: Educational Foundation, LAF, political impact, credibility, and basic organizational mission statement. The cons were: membership criteria too restrictive, dues too high, lack of local support, too many requirements (one-way support, they “feed on us”), unrealistic expectations, “vehement” stand on pro-choice, not futuristic in practice, poor networking and communication, and no clout locally.

Social Change and Feminism

When starting any systemic change process, one needs to know something about the system—what it looks like, how it got there, and how the players interact (Dolan & Moorman, 1994). In this study, I sought to understand the conditions or elements of change made by Frankenmuth AAUW members, defined as a paradigm shift. In addition to the cultural influence of the community of Frankenmuth and the organizational culture of AAUW (explained in the three preceding subsections), possible environmental factors that help explain the transformative thinking of Frankenmuth AAUW members are identified in this section. Specifically, I explore relevant aspects of societal change and feminism.

Societal Changes

Changes in the labor force over the past 150 years were the result, not just of women entering the labor market, but rather of both men and women entering the
industrial and postindustrial labor force. With this transformation in the location (from family farms) and nature of labor, families became dependent on wages and salaries for food, clothing, and other essentials. By the end of this revolution, most families no longer had any adult working at home full time (Hernandez & Myers, 1998; Heymann, 2002).

The employment of mothers of school-age children showed marked changes beginning in the 1940s, and equally discernible changes in the employment of mothers of preschool children began to take place in the 1960s. By 1990, more than 70% of children lived in households in which both parents were in the labor force. In January 1997, there were 105 million women age 16 and above in the U.S., and of that number, 62.7 million (59.7%) were in the civilian labor force (persons working or looking for work). Of the 60 million employed women in 1997, 44 million or 74% worked full time (35 or more hours per week), and 16 million or 26% worked part time. Further, in 1997, nearly 4 million women held more than one job. Many of these multiple job holders were also contingent workers, meaning they did not have an implicit or explicit contract for long-term employment. Between 1996 and 2006, women will account for 59% of growth in the total labor force. Their labor-force participation rate is expected to increase from 59.3% in 1996 to 61.4% in 2005 (“Facts, Labor Force,” 2002).

The economic gains of working women have created a vacuum at home. A quarter of the families in the world are headed by single mothers (Greer, 1999). Whether this shift in the family is recognized as an increase in single motherhood or a decrease in responsible fatherhood, the consequences affect everyone. In spite of gains, gender equity, either at work or at home, is still not the norm. Changes in labor-force
participation affect the lives of women from age 25 to 65 and lead to profound shifts in how many women care for elderly parents as well as young children ("Facts, Working Families," 2002).

Women, on average, can expect to live 19 years beyond retirement, whereas men can expect to live 15 years beyond. In 1995, women comprised only 58% of the total population 65 and older, but they comprised 74% of the poor in this group. Older women are twice as likely as older men to be poor, and nearly 40% of older women living alone live at or near the poverty level. A widowed woman is four times more likely, and a single or divorced woman is five times more likely, to live in poverty after retirement than is a married woman. Of all unmarried women age 65 and older, 40% rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their household income. Twenty-five percent rely on Social Security for 100% of their income. In 1996, the median personal income of women 65 and older was less than three fifths of the personal income of older men: $9,328 versus $16,213. Of all the major industrialized nations, the U.S. has the greatest percentage of elderly women living in poverty ("Facts, Older Women," 2002).

More than 11.5 million children live in poverty (U.S. Department, 2001) and likely will experience firsthand what many researchers contend—that poverty has long-lasting negative effects (Lyter, 2002; McLeod & Shanahan, 1996; Reynolds & Ross, 1998; Vandivere, Moore, & Brown, 2000). Growing up in poverty, especially if it is persistent, increases one's likelihood of dropping out of high school and never attending college, compromises children's physical growth and cognitive development, and reduces one's physical and psychological well-being as an adult. Improving the home life of children begins with expanding job training and education for parents, preparing them for
more stable and higher paying occupations that help them rise out of poverty (Heymann, 2002).

Children's literacy and language skills are strongly influenced by the quantity and quality of story reading in the home. Adult support helps with definitions of words and explanations of context, expanding children's vocabularies with new and challenging words, and with more complex conversations (Crain-Thoreson, Dahlin, & Powell, 2001; Lyter, 2002). Researchers have found that parents' education greatly influences the amount of time they spend reading to their young children. Among first-time kindergartners whose mothers had a high-school degree, 39% were read to on a daily basis. In contrast, 59% of kindergartners whose mothers had a bachelor's degree or more were read to daily ("U.S. Department," 1998). Children between the ages of 3 and 5 who lived in poverty were also read to less frequently than their affluent counterparts. Sixty-nine percent of impoverished children were read to at least three times a week, in comparison to 85% of those living above the poverty line (Chandler, Nord, Lennon, & Liu, 1999; Lyter, 2002).

The changing character of work and the closely related movement of women into the paid workforce were among the most far-reaching upheavals in American society during the twentieth century. This transformation of the workplace was comparable in magnitude to the metamorphosis of America a century earlier from a nation of farms to one of factories and offices. (Putnam, 2000a, p. 406)

The repercussions of this momentous civil change continue to reverberate throughout society, transforming the needs and values of families, organizations, and communities. Americans today are less likely to vote, work for a political party or candidate, or attend a political meeting than their counterparts of 40 years ago. They also belong to fewer social and community organizations and attend fewer meetings. As a
result, Americans lack the crucial "social capital" that contributes to building safe and healthy communities (Putnam, 2000a). This is a time when people need to rethink their organizational policies, structures, designs, and systems and evaluate the underlying basic assumptions, examining their beliefs about how people learn, work, and grow. The greatest disappointment, however, may be that most organizations do not engage their people. They do not help them find meaning and purpose in their work or lives (Hunt, 1998). However, there is hope, found in networks of voluntary groups and interwoven allegiances—they are the salvation of the new world in the 21st century (Mann, 1996).

Machlup (1962) first introduced the notion of a knowledge society by analyzing the growth of knowledge-producing industries in the U.S. economy, such as education, research and development, communications and media, and information machinery. The idea of a knowledge society has far reaching implications, as research shows that income and educational attainment of parents are important factors relating to children's well-being and achievement levels in school (Lyter, 2002). Further, research suggests that mothers with higher educational attainment are more involved and supportive in their parenting (Jackson, et al., 2000). Of postsecondary students, women now earn 54% of the bachelor of arts degrees awarded in the U.S., 52% of the master's and professional degrees, and 40% of the doctorates. However, women are still severely underrepresented in certain fields, earning 6% of graduate degrees in computer science, 14% in physics, and 16% in engineering ("Facts, Women in Higher Education," 2002).

Information and knowledge have become key resources in postindustrial societies, in much the same way that labor and capital are central resources of industrial societies (Bell, 1974; Sohng, 1995). New technical and economic forces are creating a more
culturally impoverished and ecologically destructive world system, and a concomitant
degeneration of political democracy and ordinary everyday community (Agger, 1985;
Bell, 1976; Beninger, 1986; Gartner & Riessman, 1974; Grahame, 1985; Sohng, 1995).
Organizational changes such as restructuring, mergers, and reorganizations have occurred
with increasing frequency since the 1980s (Brown, 2002). The effect on the people
involved in these transitions is not confined to the workplace environment, but rather
reverberates through society with far-reaching influences on attitudes, expectations, and
perspectives.

Machlup’s knowledge society may also be defined as a blur economy (Davis &
Meyer, 1998), in which the economic web is essentially about relationships. The old
polarities between business and education are coming together in a way that includes the
creative human spirit as a realistic factor in the competitive marketplace. Many people
are now “free agents,” which has far-reaching implications on expectations regarding
work, relationships, and community. The connectivity of the economy and its resources
is creating an environment that supports the development of learning programs that
enhance the individual, thereby strengthening the entire system. Ogilvy (2002) said that
“individualism is the name in the new economy” (p. 222). He went on to explain that
individualism is precisely what becoming more human is all about, citing psychologists
from Jung to Erikson.

The shift in the economy has moved people to a place where everything is a
service. An organization defines what it does, not in terms of technology or assets, but in
terms of its value for the customer or person using it. Delivering value is part of being
more attuned to the needs of one’s market. The events happening outside the
organization or business are the most critical to the firm or association—the customer's or member's experience as a result of using or interacting with the organization. Lanning (1998) pointed out that these “resulting experiences” can easily escape attention, especially if one is caught up in a paradigm that is organizationally focused, not member-centered. Lukacs (2002) describes this shift as the end of an era, he believes that

Yes, we are at—we are living through—the end of an age. But how few people know that! The sense of it has begun to appear in the hearts of many; but has not yet swum up to the surface of their consciousness. That will happen, even though there exists many obstacles to it—among them, enormous but corroding institutions. As these lines are being written, something is happening in the United States that has had no precedent.

A great division among the American people has begun—gradually, slowly—to take shape... between people who are still unthinking believers in technology and in economic determinism and people who are not... It has to do with conscious thinking. We have arrived at a stage of history when we must begin thinking about thinking itself. That is something as different from philosophy as it is from psychoanalysis. At the end of an age, we must engage in a radical rethinking of "progress," of history, of "science," of the limitations of our knowledge, of our place in the universe. (Lukacs, 2002, p. 33)

In the essay “Leadership and the Chaordic Age” Hock (2002) called the future for organizations and relating to people in the new science “chaordic,” which she defined as “any self-organizing and governing, adaptive, non-linear, complex organism, organization or system exhibiting behavior characteristics of both order and chaos” (p. 305). In this environment, institutions and people will require continuous learning and transformation in order to harmoniously co-evolve with all other institutions, with all people, and with all other living things, to the highest potential of each and all.

The Impact of Feminism and the “Women’s Movement”

Society in a word is sexist. It systematically favors men over women, and it engineers and maintains structures to ensure that men receive better treatment and have more options available to them. These structures are robust and effective in
both private and public life. Feminism is the movement that brought this matter to our attention. (Minas, 1993, p. 2)

Acknowledging that males have an advantage in American society is tantamount to recognizing that they are overprivileged. Although men may be willing to admit that women are disadvantaged, they deny that men gain from this situation. "These denials protect male privilege from being fully recognized, lessened or ended" (McIntosh, 1993, p. 3). Any member of an oppressed class, whether it be by age, sex, sexual preference, or race, can more easily empathize with others who are oppressed. Those in the dominant class who benefit from unearned privilege, namely White males, are less likely to recognize oppression by virtue of the fact that they cannot relate to the experience. "To redesign social systems, we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions" (p. 38). The oppression may be invisible and yet have far-reaching effects. In the classroom, studies have indicated that girls learn to be passive and to get by with less feedback. A study of adults indicated that women were unable to develop conversations and less likely to dominate professional meetings than men (Mann, 1996).

Writer Katha Pollitt (as cited in Tanenbaum, 1999, p. 42) described feminism as being "about justice, fairness, and access to the broad range of human experience." It is a commitment to understanding women's own perceptions or their situations, an awareness and explanation of women's oppression, and a translation of thought into action. Women's situations, including those relating to oppression, are not all uniform. The diversity of human experience results in different responses to the same or similar experiences (Minas, 1993).

The agendas of most women's organizations are palatable, commonsensical, and unscary to the majority of Americans: health care, family leave, pay equity, and voters'
rights, to name a few. If the average American saw feminist organizations' literature, she or he would find very little to object to, and quite a lot to sign up to support (Wolf, 1994). But Wolf argued that, rather than receiving that message, journalists interview feminist theorists and philosophers who polarize the movement.

For some, the feminist movement has made feminism a word that carries a negative connotation. Although some people may believe that the movement has done a lot for women in terms of helping them to become equal to men, they also feel that it has pushed an agenda that has been negative toward the family. Feminism may have become a negative label, much like chauvinism. The negative, militant connotation may deter women in business from aligning themselves with an organization professing to be feminist in nature.

Women's-studies literature has shown the divisiveness within the feminist movement. There is no clear definition of what it means to be a feminist. Ironically, many popular books feature authors explaining why their worldview is more accurate than others' and quoting other feminists as wrongly defining the situation. “Unpopular feminists ‘fight’ for liberation; popular feminists work for equality” (Greer, 1999, p. 309). There is a distinction between “gender feminist activists,” who are the “bad ones” fighting for total equality and considered radically left liberals, and the “good” mainstream feminists, who seek equal pay for equal work, provided people actually do the work (Greer, 1999).

In Fire With Fire (1994), Wolf referred to the Guardian (1991) survey entitled, “What Women Really Think.” Only 9% of 11,000 respondents saw feminism positively and only 13% belonged to a women's group. Though 51% of the respondents who were
in management positions believed they were discriminated against and 58% said that sexual discrimination at work had not changed. "An ICM poll of the same year showed that 57 percent of women had a positive view of the goals of the movement, but 41 percent did not believe those goals had been achieved" (Wolf, 1994, p. 59).

During the past 30 years, feminism has contributed decisively to the revolution that has transformed women's lives and helped to reshape the way they think about what it means to be a woman. "But it still has not convinced the majority of American women that it offers an adequate story of their lives" (Fox-Genovese, 1996, p. 13). From the start, the feminist story divided women by race, class, and religion. As some women pushed for greater rights and opportunities, others feared losing their traditional roles as wives and mothers. The majority of Americans have come to define feminism as equality at work and the even more controversial right to choose an abortion. "As it happens, most Americans no longer believe that feminism offers the best way to improve a woman's position" (Fox-Genovese, 1996, p. 18).

It was not until 1980 that the first presidential election took place in which more women than men cast their ballots ("'88, Political," 1988). Although women's support for women's rights steadily rose throughout the 1980s, the number of women willing to identify themselves as feminists declined. Wolf (1994) believed that the main reason women's desire for higher status is not reflected in reality is that twice as many women believe in the goals of the women's movement as are willing to use the word feminist. She said that this "paralyzes women's political will" (p. 59). Wolf and others have attributed the fundamental reason for a disconnect from feminism to a perception that supporting women's issues signals an allegiance to an unwieldy package of attitudes. a
sexist stereotype, that may or may not include them. Abortion, lesbianism, pornography, body image and wearing make-up, sexual harassment and rape are all divisive issues that some part of the cause represents.

Researchers of the 1992 Ms. Foundation survey, “Women’s Voices ’92: A Polling Report,” which was called the first national survey to evaluate women’s views across class and racial lines, found the term feminist makes many women “personally uncomfortable” even as they endorse the movement’s goals. The survey indicated that feminists “are seen by many as being more out for themselves than out for ordinary women and their families” (Wolf, 1994, p. 58). Although women in this survey viewed the women’s movement favorably (rating of 62 on a scale of 100).

Many women, the report concluded, feel distant from the term ‘feminist,’ which to them does not seem to share their own priority of family nor the daily struggles of many women who are constantly pulled and stretched for time and money. (Wolf, 1994, p. 58)

Wolf reported that NOW calls these “contradictory times” because, although women recoil from the feminist label, they are simultaneously donating record sums of money to women’s rights organizations.

In a 1997 national opinion poll it was found that “nearly seven out of ten women feel political parties do not pay sufficient attention to issues of importance to women” (Greer, 1999, p. 14). But, again, these women did not identify with feminism nor would they call themselves feminists. As a political entity, feminism has little clout. It exists as an idea outside the realm of political instrumentation.

Insight may be gained by looking at information from the National Council of Women’s Organization’s (NCWO) which indicated that, in 1995, 60% of all employed women worked in traditional female-dominated occupations. Two out of every three
temporary workers were women. Women comprised 44% of the total number employed in executive, administrative, and managerial positions in 1996, up from 39% in 1988. In 1996, 42% of women in executive, administrative, and managerial positions were employed in the service industry, compared to 31% of men in such positions. Women were also much less likely than men to be employed in manufacturing, construction, transportation, and public utilities ("Facts, Labor Force," 2002)

Some of the disparity between women and men working in more lucrative careers may be because of what Wolf (1994) believed to be women's lack of confidence in relation to both power and money. She wrote,

Generations of female college students opt for humanities studies that guarantee them the lowest professional salaries while 80 to 90 percent of undergraduate in the high-paying hard science, engineering, and math fields are male. When working-class high school girls are asked to choose professions, most opt for low-paying service and support fields; less than 4 percent choose the higher-paying trades. (p. 243)

Despite gains, the wage gap for women holding B.A. degrees is 72% overall. An African-American college-educated woman earns 34% less than a college-educated White male, whereas Hispanic women earn 32% less. Collectively, women lose more than $100 billion annually in wages due to pay inequity. According to a recent study by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, a 25-year-old woman who works full time year-round for the next 40 years will earn $523,000 less than the average 25-year-old man, if current wage patterns continue. About 60% of the improvement in the wage gap during the past 15 years can be attributed to the decline in men's real earnings ("Facts, Pay Equity," 2002).

Further evidence of wage disparity has been reported by the National Academy of Sciences. According to the Academy, between one-third and one-half of the wage
difference between men and women cannot be explained by differences in experience, education, or other legitimate qualifications. Demonstrating that there is still not equal pay for equal work, a 1997 study by the Academy indicated that female public relations and marketing managers earned 31% less than male managers, female elementary-school teachers earned 9% less than their male counterparts; female retail sales workers made 32% less than their male counterparts, and female economists made 27% less than male economists. Even among recent college graduates, women earned 15.7% less than men did (“Facts. Pay Equity,” 2002).

The number of women on boards of directors grew by 9% in 1994, 7% in 1995, and 3% in 1996. Only 626 out of 6,123 board positions (10.2%) were held by women. A total of 53 women of color sit on boards (12.6% of women board members, 1.4% of total members). This is an important area for women, as research has indicated a direct correlation between the number of women on a company's board and the number of women serving as corporate officers and at the highest corporate level in that company. Companies with one woman board member have an average of 7.1% women at the highest corporate levels, whereas those with three or more women on the board have 30.4% (“Facts. Women in Business,” 2002).

Feminist theory suggests that the journey to adulthood is different for girls than boys. Until the workplace shifts toward accommodating the reproductive and family needs of all employees, women are unlikely to reach their full employment potential. The guiding principles for happiness are to do what you love, nurture others and yourself, and diversify sources of self-esteem in both career and relationships so that you can honor both yourself and your relationships (Kaltreider, 1997). Over the past 4 decades, the
increased employment and education opportunities for young women have also changed their aspirations and made them less exclusively oriented toward female roles.

Professional women today have gained a wider vision of their future and a greater sense of control and responsibility for it (Kaltreider, 1997; Schwartz, 1992).

"All studies of gender difference agree on one thing, that females are less variable than males. If men and women are poppies, both the tallest and the shortest would be men. The women would cluster around the median, the norm" (Greer, 1999, p. 243). In a competitive environment, this means that men are the winners as well as the losers. In contrast, women focus on building relationships, sharing, cooperating, and understanding each other. Explanations for the continuing inequity vary (Apter, 1993; Bateson, 1990; Kaltreider, 1997), ranging from a society that supports male power to psychological issues that lead women to seek different goals and means of achieving them, accepting messages of disdain and derogation in the process. As long as successful women are considered the exception, the concept of inherent group inferiority will be maintained.

Organizational Change

This chapter reviews organizational change, defined as "an empirical observation of difference in form, quality, or state over time in an organizational entity. The entity may be an individual's job, a work group, an organizational strategy, a program, a product, or the overall organization" (Palmer & Dunford, 1996, p. 1; see also Ford & Ford, 1995; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). The chapter also briefly discusses change leaders, or the people who foster change.

To date, research in the field of organizational design and voluntary action has consisted primarily of assessing the nature of relationships among sectors and
understanding citizen participation, such as how to manage and motivate volunteers (Karr, 2001). Whether one is looking at managing volunteers or managing change, communication is critical. In 350 B.C., Aristotle said that if communication is to change behavior, it must be grounded in the desires and interests of the receivers. In the more than 2000 years since then, this central idea has not changed significantly (Larkin & Larkin, 1994). All organizations, regardless of their mission statement or tax status, seek to become more efficient, evolving toward providing greater value and more freedom with less work.

Many organizational theorists have posited a differentiated and diverse world of organizations and have sought to explain variations in structure and behavior among organizations (Child & Kieser, 1981; DiMaggio & Powell, 1988; Woodward, 1965). Organizations must take into account other organizations and entities that compete for resources, political power, and institutional legitimacy (Dimaggio & Powell, 1988). Meeting the requirements for cohesion and performance creates a justice dilemma for organizations as they adopt different patterns of structures, processes, and values (Sheppard, Lewicki, & Minton, 1992). The cohesion requirement leads organizations to adopt egalitarian, solidaristic values and practices, but the need for productivity leads them toward efficiency- and equity-based ones (Deutsch, 1985; Meindl, 1989). The more systems adopt an efficiency orientation, the more equity values will predominate and organizational resources and rewards will be differentially or unequally allocated. Thus, inequality and consequent threats to social cohesion or integration become problematic in the system (Kabanoff, 1991). The more an egalitarian orientation predominates, however, the more egalitarian practices and allocations will tend to be. This leads to
economic inefficiency and inequity pressures or problems. Thus, to meet the need for economic efficiency, organizations adopt values that mandate allocating their resources equitably; to maintain internal cohesion and solidarity, however, they adopt values that mandate allocating their resources equally (Meindl, 1989). The different ways in which organizations try to find a sustainable balance between these competing values shape their overall value structures (Kabanoff, Walden, & Cohen, 1995).

Organizational change of volunteer associations, nonprofits, and governments may not happen as quickly as private-sector organizations because they lack three basic accountability mechanisms of business. First, they do not have the self-interest that comes with ownership, that the business accomplishes its goals efficiently, and that risks are appropriately evaluated. Second, they often lack the competition that would force efficiency. Finally, they lack the ultimate barometer of business success, the profit measure. The people dedicating their time and resources to sit on boards are often talented and devoted, but they are simply too few in number to replicate the valuable diversity of opinion provided by customers. No matter how devoted they are, their decisions are made within the sanctity of the organization and often lack the accountability of the market (Herzlinger, 1996).

Traditional approaches to organizational theory have been dominated by the belief that change originates in the environment (Morgan, 1997). Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, two South American biologists, challenged this basic idea, leading the charge that people cognitively create their experience through the structure of our nervous system and consciousness combined with stimuli from the environment. Maturana and Varela's work is often referred to as autopoietic theory or enactivism.
They argue that all living systems are organizationally closed in order to maintain stable patterns of relations and that it is this process of closure or self-reference that ultimately distinguishes a system as a system. Living systems strive to maintain identity by subordinating all changes to the maintenance of their own organization as a given set of relations. According to the theory, systems can be recognized as having "environments" or cultures, but relations with any environment are internally determined (Morgan, 1997).

Maturana and Varela developed the theory of autopoiesis as part of an interpretation of biological phenomena and had strong reservations about applying it to the world of the social sciences. However, this theory is valuable in helping to see that organizations are always attempting to achieve a form of self-referential closure in relation to their environments, enacting their own environments as extensions of themselves. Also, this perspective helps explain that many of the problems that organizations encounter are intimately connected with the identity they are working to maintain (Morgan, 1997). These biologists further said one must look not only at what is changing, but also at what stays the same or is being conserved (Isaacs, 1999).

"Nonprofit institutions need a healthy atmosphere for dissent if they wish to foster innovation and commitment" (Drucker, 1999, Encourage Constructive Dissent section). There is a considerable body of academic research demonstrating that conflict over issues is valuable. Conflict provides people with a more expansive range of information, a deeper understanding of the issues, and a richer set of possible solutions (Eisenhardt, Kahwajy, & Bourgeois, 1997). Yet, in the organizational world, there is an implied argument that organizations should avoid conflict instead of striving for a form of
community suited to their environment. Reality is never so neat. Leaders face challenges of adjusting their organization and its culture to the changing environment (Goffee & Jones, 1996). A high level of intervention in decision making occurs when the long-term pattern of behavior shifts qualitatively in a system (Goodman & Karash, 1994).

Sustaining any profound change process requires a fundamental shift in thinking, as well as understanding that every movement is being inhibited as it occurs (Senge et al., 1999). Some of the recognized barriers to sustainable or transformational change relate to the lack of available resources, relationships, and the one that is probably the most pervasive, paradigms.

Biologically, people are holographic thinkers. Holographically, change takes place by strengthening the new behavior in such a way that it replaces the old one. The repetition of not only the process, but also the reward, is critical to establishing a new predominant, unconscious reaction. If this process is interrupted and the previous behavior is reinforced, it may return as the primary response. Conservatism, once it is programmed by culture, is difficult to change in both individuals and organizations. This is why change is such a long-term process and more successful when approached from a systemic perspective (Hall, 1989; Lashley, 1929; Pietsch, 1972a, 1972b; Pribram, 1969, 1971).

Learning takes place when the rules are suspended, such as during a crisis (Koestenbaum & Block, 2001). The patterns that govern behavior and perception come into consciousness only when there is a deviation from the plan. This explains why the paradigms and rules governing people's behavior function below the level of their conscious awareness and are not generally available for analysis (Hall, 1989; Powers,
1973). Therefore, people look to decision making and patterns of behavior to understand the invisible rules and principles guiding their choices.

According to systems theory, no one element of a system can be viewed separately from the other elements (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). This may explain why nonhierarchical maps of organizational structure are emerging across a range of disciplines, sufficiently broad to justify talk of a new paradigm (Ogilvy, 2002). In organizational communication there is a correlation between where one is in the hierarchy and how much he or she knows or is invested in the organization (Dolan & Moorman, 1994). This is significant in light of Argyris's (2000) contention that internal commitment, and therefore evolutionary change, cannot be activated from the top (Fullan, 2001). Evidence of the existence of different change themes in organizations with different value structures suggests that change agents tailor their change messages to a given values context (Meindl, 1989).

According to Fritz and Senge (1999), organizations follow inescapable structural laws and they must follow the path of least resistance. The authors defined structure as an entity made up of individual elements or parts that influence each other by the relationships they form. This definition is similar to Goffee and Jones's (1996) description of culture, or community. They stated that culture and community are the same; they are the outcome of how people relate to one another, built on shared interests and mutual obligations, and thrive on cooperation and friendships. Regardless of the term that is used, structure, culture, or community, the definition identifies relationships as the central blocks of organizations.
The deep paradox about change is that people resist the change on both an individual and organizational level, yet they dream about and deeply pursue change. Thus, to design successful reform, one must design against the pathology, healing the system as it restructures itself. A design for change, then, is not a series of good ideas for how to do things better, but rather it is a series of steps that lead to something else (Dolan & Moorman, 1994). To overcome the resistance, the paradox, people need to discover the freedom and accountability inherent in the choices they make. Organizational meaning is experienced through collective dialogue about purpose, the process of exploring all the questions that will never satisfactorily be answered. Organizations are transformed the moment people decide they are theirs to create (Koestenbaum & Block, 2001). The organization must possess the ability to (a) rapidly develop, and continuously integrate, new learning and knowledge to serve the business and the marketplace; (b) create circumstances in which people are passionate about the business and choose accountability for its success; and (c) act quickly and smartly on the demands of the marketplace (Showkeir, 2002). “Successful organizations also develop the ability to continuously reinvent themselves as frequently as the marketplace changes. They create conditions that are derived from and through the way they operate” (Showkeir, 2002, p. 156).

Volunteerism and Leadership

The social sector encompasses 1.5 million nonprofit organizations in the United States and 20,000,000 around the world. These organizations generate trillions of dollars a year, changing lives in the process (Hesselbein, 2000). According to Peter F. Drucker, founder of the Drucker Foundation, “The 21st century will be the century of the social
sector organization. The more economy, money, and information become global, the more community will matter” (Drucker, 1999, p.1).

While Putnam (2000a) points out that individual Americans belong to fewer social and community organizations and attend fewer meetings than 40 years ago, community service continues to be an integral part of business leaders’ lives. Results from a survey of 9,800 Harvard Business School graduates and 316 Fortune 5000 company CEOs show that involvement is very high (81 percent) and it is an integral part of executives lives (63 percent considered their nonprofit involvement to be “very important”) (Austin, 1998).

The practice of advancing one’s personal or business interests by joining a charitable board has been around for decades—as has the understanding that board membership can be contingent on being able to attract financial resources. Because nonprofits face serious financial and strategic challenges, business executives and professionals make valuable contributions when they donate their expertise, time, and commitment. New to this social exchange are brokering organizations that earn money by bringing together these two parties, business executives seeking voluntary board positions and organizations seeking qualified volunteers (Langley, 1999).

In addition to new methods of bringing executives and social sector organizations together through brokering volunteer services, new approaches of connecting philanthropists with donor organizations are also emerging. While generations of philanthropists, leaders from corporate and social sector organizations, have gotten together for fundraising events, such as black-tie dinners, new philanthropists network through task forces, classrooms, and Web sites (“Business Volunteers,” 1999).
In a world where the rules are constantly changing, every sector of the economy wrestles with the new demands of leadership (Hesselbein, 1998a). The global language of today's leaders, including business, nonprofits, and government is mission, strategy, and customer (Hesselbein, 2001). Encouraging change and transformation in an organization begins not with systems or policies, but with people (Hesselbein, 1998b). The development of leaders for today is not a method of survival, but rather a directive to continue the organization in the future.

"Leadership is a quest, a search that never ends for most of us" (DePree, 2002, p. 89). This quest begins by recognizing change as a natural part of living, a natural part of any organization. The focus of leaders, then, is not on change, but rather how to effectively innovate and create opportunity as a result of anticipated changes. Drucker believes social sector nonprofit organizations who exploit opportunities, mobilize resources, and solve problems will determine the values, vision, cohesion, and performance of the 21st century society (Hesselbein, 2000).

Change Leadership

Regardless of whichever leadership theory is discussed, the literature has revealed that effective leadership in an organization is critical (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1999). Leadership is a process that is ultimately concerned with fostering change. In contrast to the notion of management, which suggests preservation or maintenance, leadership implies a process in which there is movement—from a current reality to some future place or condition that is different. Leadership also implies intentionality, in the sense that the implied change is not random—making change for change's sake—but is rather directed toward some future end or condition that is
desired or valued. Accordingly, leadership is a purposive process that is inherently value-based. Consistent with the notion that leadership is concerned with change, the leader basically is a change agent, i.e., the one who fosters change. Leaders, then, are not necessarily those who merely hold formal "leadership" positions; on the contrary, all people are potential leaders. Furthermore, because the concepts of leadership and leader imply that there are other people involved, leadership is, by definition, a collective or group process (Astin & Astin, 2000).

There is a misconception that women, by their nature, are kinder and gentler leaders than men, even though few behavioral differences between the sexes have been consistently observed among corporate leaders (Lipman-Blumen, Fryling, Henderson, Moore, & Vecchiotti, 1996; Orenstein, 2000). Contrary evidence was provided by Heim, Murphy, and Golant (2001) who stated that "study after study find that women outscore men in most management categories" (p. 250). Aside from whether women are "better" managers, researchers are likely to agree that women place high value on the importance of social interactions and maintenance of relationships. In fact, Briles (1999) found that women derive meaning in their lives predominantly through interpersonal relationships and by learning and observing from others as well as their own life experiences (as cited in Heim et al., 2001).

The challenges are the same for all of today's leaders, regardless of gender. They have to be relationship oriented and smart. One aspect of leadership is the ability to see new things and communicate in a powerful and inspiring way. Leaders must be able to look at a lot of data and experiences, then have new insight that inspires others to take action. Leaders, wherever they are, lead by virtue of the relationships they are able to...
build—that people believe them, trust them, and are willing to follow them—and by virtue of the power of their ideas (Abernathy, 2001).

Paradigms can become so integrated into our belief system that they are invisible, hidden barriers to evolution and change. Old mental models and decision habits are deeply ingrained and do not change solely on the basis of a logical argument. The aim of some system-dynamics theorists, mostly found in corporate and educational settings, is to change the mental models that people use to represent the real world. To do this, a person must become sufficiently involved in the modeling process to internalize lessons about dynamic feedback behavior (Forrester, 1989). There will not be significant change in organizations or society until people are willing to invest personally and engage themselves enough to internalize lessons about dynamic feedback behavior. Social change, like other systemic change, begins with self, a foundation of self-awareness and self-confidence that can lead to self-actualization and learning.

Harvard professor and leadership consultant Rosebeth Moss Kanter in an interview with Abernathy (2001) explained her vision of change leaders. Organizational leaders must get past the rhetoric of change by putting vision into action. Leaders who do the best job of leading change begin with a vision of where they want to go that is well-articulated, communicated wisely, and communicated repeatedly. Second, they look for exemplary practices and innovations that are already occurring, models that reflect the new way they want to operate. Third, they organize to manage a change process with real resources behind it, to help move projects and the company to a new state of being. Leaders also give people responsibility, setting new measures that tell people what the standards are and assess progress toward the goals. They give feedback to an
organization, looking to see whether policies, practices, systems, and structures support the change goals. Those who are good at mastering change keep putting the goals and the progress in front of people.

One of the best ways is to get needed buy-in is to begin with the needs, interests, and points of view of the people in an organization and use those to guide changes. A leader should not announce a new vision or new changes until people have been asked, "What do you think? What are the challenges facing you? What are the new opportunities or threats that come from the external environment?" It is important to get people involved in the process of defining the future, moving beyond the organization's established practice. Visions of an improved future come from integrative environments that support innovation, and encourage the building of coalitions and teams to support the vision. There are moments in the flow of organizational history when it is possible to reconstruct reality on the basis of accumulated innovations to shape a more productive and successful future (Abernathy, 2001).

A change-adept organization is one that is constantly investing in three things. First is innovation. It is important to have many experiments and projects that pull people in new directions and help them learn something new. Second, such an organization is attuned to learning and professionalism. It is constantly improving what it is already doing, learning from mistakes. Third, a change-adept organization is good at collaboration and works with customers, suppliers, and other partners, not only to do today's task well, but also to gain ideas for innovation. Basically, change-adept organizations are constantly improving on what they are doing and spreading that knowledge through the organization (Abernathy, 2001).
High-performance leaders believe in constant renewal, thrive on discontinuity and chaos, worship inconsistency, and produce movement (Belasen, 2000). When people are called on to help, as long as they respond in a positive way the process still has value. Leaders have to be careful not to get caught up in believing they need to have all the answers. Enabling people to express their individuality within the context of a higher purpose can lead to "gloriousness." Forcing things to evolve, driving the progress at an unacceptable pace, and not allowing for periods of adjustment are a prescription for disaster (Higgins & Gilberd, 2000).

Leadership researchers such as Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993) have noted that a key aspect of leading large-scale change is making followers aware of their deeply held values and conscious that other members of the group share those values (as cited in Kabanoff et al., 1995). "Leadership, then, is not mobilizing others to solve problems they already know how to solve, but to help them confront problems that have never yet been successfully addressed" (Fullan, 2001, p. 3).

**Summary**

It is important to keep in mind that there will never be a definitive theory of change (Fullan, 1999). It is theoretically and empirically impossible to generate a theory that applies to all situations. Theories can guide thinking and action, but the reality is complexity tells us that each situation will be unique with unpredictable differences that will emerge (Fullan, 1999). Although we may not be able to predict organizational change, we can better understand the culture and environment of the organization we seek to study. In addition to the historical background of AAUW and the Frankenmuth community, for purposes of this study, it is important to note the changing roles of
women, the nebulous characteristics of feminism, and the broad aspects of organizational change and change leadership.

Society, feminism, organizational change, and leadership are four key themes that lend additional insight into understanding the conditions, paradigms, and culture influencing how members of the Frankenmuth branch of AAUW view the world. Although each individual member is selective in their interpretation of the aforementioned events and influence of these factors on their everyday life, the collective impact can be demonstrated by identifying patterns. To better understand organizational change, then, we must look to markers such as the effect of culture, reflect on decisions made by association leaders, and note shifts in organizational behavior.

In the next chapter I explain the methodology of this study, the scientific principles and procedures of this inquiry. The chapter is divided into subsections relating to the various research considerations. These are an overview of the study, research methodology, this study, ethical considerations, assumptions and researcher bias, limitations of the study, validity, and generalizability.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Study

My purpose in this study was to design, implement, and assess the initial change and growth of a local voluntary organization. Through the process of participatory-action research I sought to identify the paradigm shift that moved members of a 27-year-old voluntary organization from a static position to consider significant organizational change. The research shows how the group's decision making changed from an organization-centered perspective to a member-centered approach throughout three learning cycles identified in the study. To compare the three learning cycles, I segmented the decision-making process into eight organizational themes: knowledge structure, leadership, communication, learning, success, risk taking, goal setting, and organizational culture.

Research Methodology

Qualitative research has a long tradition in the social and behavioral sciences, specifically cultural anthropology, history, political science, and American sociology (Creswell, 1994; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Pyrczak, 1999). It has recently gained a large following in many applied fields, including organizational studies, business studies, education, psychology, sociology, linguistics, public administration, health care, urban planning, family studies, program evaluation, and policy analysis.
(Borg & Gall, 1989; Creswell, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Pyrczak, 1999). The intention of qualitative researchers is to better understand a particular social situation from the mind-set that social phenomena exist not only in the mind, but also in the objective world (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989; Harré & Secord, 1973; Manicas & Secord, 1982; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Over the past 20 years, psychological researchers have documented that the human mind actively creates what it knows and that this process of creating understanding continues throughout one's lifetime. Cognitive psychologists believe that, from the very first moments of life, human beings begin to interact with and explore the world, actively searching for meaning, constructing and reconstructing mental representations of what the world is all about (Copple, Sigel, & Saunders, 1984; Gardner, 1991; Huba & Freed, 2000). Humans seem to have an insatiable desire for new information, and they are driven to make sense of it. A constructivism theory of learning is based on the belief that people learn by constructing knowledge, rather than receiving knowledge from others (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Duffy & Cunningham, 1996; Fosnot, 1996, Huba & Freed, 2000).

Kurt Lewin developed the action research model in the mid-1940s to respond to the chasm between social action and social theory (Dickens & Watkins, 1999; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Peters & Robinson, 1984). Action science is a strategy for designing situations that foster effective stewardship of organizations through learning about one's self and one's environment. As a learning framework the approach is designed to help individuals, groups, and organizations develop a readiness to overcome barriers to organizational change by focusing on both the external and internal environment.
(Enhanced Designs, 2000). Action research encompasses a variety of activities rather than on one specific format. "In action research, truth is in the process of inquiry itself" (Dickens & Watkins, 1999, p. 5).

Participatory-action research builds on the constructivist paradigm by integrating those who were previously considered subjects as participants in the research process. It is essentially ethnographic fieldwork (Borgatti, 1998). The pragmatic nature of action science, linking knowledge, action, community, and democracy, can be found in the works of John Dewey (1976), William James (1948, 1995), Kurt Lewin (1935, 1948), Charles Peirce (1950), and Stephen Toulmin and Bjorn Gustavsen (1996). Further, participatory-action research reflects goal-oriented experiential learning (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1974; Mead, 1934; Shor, 1992; Sohng, 1995), focusing on process rather than on an experimental method measuring cause and effect.

Participatory-action research is a means of collective action—the process of putting research capabilities in the hands of subjects ranging from a group of educators to a community of deprived and disenfranchised people. This methodology allows the participant/researcher to define reality, shape a new identity, name history, and transform lives (Callaway, 1981; Fernandes & Tandon, 1981; Gaventa, 1993; Horton, 1990; Humphries & Truman, 1994; Maguire, 1987; Sohng, 1995; Stanley & Wise, 1983). The purpose of participatory-action research is to learn from your experience and apply that learning to bring about change. The principles of democratic participation and social action, and the cycling between analyzing a situation, and conceptualizing or reframing the situation have the potential to bring about organizational learning (Dickens & Watkins, 1999).
Action research is gestaltist in origin, meaning that rather than study a single variable within a complex system, the entire system within its natural environment (gestalt) is considered (Dickens, & Watkins, 1999; Foster, 1972). Participatory-action science research views the production of knowledge as a dynamic process of engagement, education, communication, action, and reflection (Finn, 1994; Sohng, 1995). As a general rule, animals learn what is good for them, according to Lorenz (1965). A similar account can be given of human learning and intelligence, but because of the limitations placed on experimentation, the evidence is less direct. Intelligence and instinct are closely interwoven to the point that learning can be thought of as an extension of instinct. Put simply, some things exist only because everyone agrees to believe that they exist (Plotkin, 1996). At a minimum, the extragenetic transmission of information, a theory-of-mind module, and the evolution of a responsiveness to social force are the elements necessary for the appearance of human culture. Whether through cooperation, coercion, or education, people establish agreed-on mental states and values on matters that relate in large part to the existence and continuing function of the social group. Culture, or shared knowledge, is truly a population-level or group-level phenomenon (Plotkin, 1996).

As the name suggests, participatory-action research is a methodology that has the dual aims of action and research. The participatory aspect of the research places a strong value on democracy, control, and responsibility over one’s life situations. Action means facilitation or active involvement in the design and implementation of organizational change, in this case with the Frankenmuth Area Branch of the AAUW. Research generates new knowledge and increases understanding of the process and the conditions...
leading to the transformational change (Babbie, 2001; Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Stringer, 1999).

Recently, a new understanding of the process of organizational change has emerged. Change is not implemented from the top down or bottom up, but is participative and can be identified by investigating patterns of behavior of the system over time (Senge et al., 1994). My research operates from a general systems-theory perspective, a holistic view of the world. This perspective, according to Greenwood and Levin (1998), has been applied to physics, chemistry, biology, and engineering, and more recently to the analysis of organizational behavior (Argyris, 1985; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Flood & Romm, 1996). Systems thinking challenges assumptions about how the world works by helping to expand understanding, allowing one to see how the parts work together, and how the relationships between the elements in a system influence behavior (Sweeney, 2001).

**Design of the Study**

My objective in this study was to identify and understand the actions and decisions of the members of the local Frankenmuth AAUW branch as they related to the change and growth of the organization. The goal was to use this knowledge to facilitate change in the organization to more effectively achieve its mission and reciprocally meet members’ needs. I began by investigating sociological research and methodology, hoping to find similar research efforts that would provide insight and tools used to measure organizational change in a community volunteer organization. I was unable to find any other studies about the AAUW. One book written about the association tells only part of the AAUW story. Specifically, “the history recounted here focuses on the organization at its national level and emphasizes only those themes that seemed to connect AAUW to the
larger world of women's organizations and liberal reform from 1929 to 1979" (Levine, 1995, p. x). I was also unable to locate any other participatory-action studies in which the participant was a member of a local branch or chapter of a national organization. This lack of comparative studies led me instead to the science of sociology, investigating the concepts of culture and civic society, studying the primary societal influences on a local women's organization, and ultimately to organizational change theory and paradigm shifts.

Kuhn (1996) and others pointed out that every significant breakthrough in science is first a break with tradition, old ways of thinking, and old paradigms (Franklin Covey, 1998). Huba and Freed (2000) looked at the shift from a student-centered paradigm to a learner-centered paradigm (see also Barr & Tagg, 1995; Boyatzis, Cowen, Kolb, & Associates, 1995; Duffy & Jones, 1995; Kleinsasser, 1995). Current thinking about organizational learning and change is based on assumptions about the roles of the organization and its members, the type of environment or culture that supports organizational growth, and how people learn. Huba and Freed (2000) in Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning and the American Society of Association Executives' Change Management Tool Kit (DePass-Shuler, Dyer, & Meyers, 2001) used similar themes as hallmarks indicating a shift in thinking and behaving. Using these researchers as a model for defining a paradigm shift, I formulated Table 2 to show the transition from an organization-centered paradigm to a member-centered paradigm with regard to the eight organizational themes.
Table 2

*Explanation of Organization-Centered and Member-Centered Paradigms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Organization-Centered Paradigm</th>
<th>Member-Centered Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Structure</td>
<td>Knowledge is transmitted through organization hierarchy from board to members.</td>
<td>Members construct knowledge through gathering and synthesizing information, integrating it with skills of inquiry, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Board manages the organization through a bureaucratic, subjective decision-making process, focusing on day-to-day details.</td>
<td>The board facilitates leadership by all members, building a shared vision through a fluid, fast, flexible decision-making process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Members passively receive information, products, and programs. Information is general in nature, not customized. Access to information is convenient to the sender, not necessarily the receiver.</td>
<td>Members are actively involved in all organizational levels, finding value through knowledge and experiences. The environment features anytime, anywhere collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>The organization maintains programs indefinitely, supporting an “if-it’s not broke, don’t fix it” mentality</td>
<td>Success is defined by Member value and resulting experiences. Focus is on individuals’ needs and developing relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Success is measured by traditional terms, retention rate, and net growth.</td>
<td>Members and the organization experience continuous learning through celebrating mistakes. The group confronts barriers to transformation and invention, retiring programs as soon as they are irrelevant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2—Continued.

**Explanation of Organization-Centered and Member-Centered Paradigms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Organization-Centered Paradigm</th>
<th>Member-Centered Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk taking</td>
<td>Emphasis is on risk containment, right answers, researching existing best practices and long lead times.</td>
<td>Emphasis is on generating and taking risks, asking better questions, and innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>Focus is on organizational goals, with rigid predesigned budget and planning systems.</td>
<td>Approach integrates personal goals with organizational goals and is a self-adjusting, self-informing system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture</td>
<td>Culture is competitive and individualistic. Traditional political agendas and internal focus are based on past experiences.</td>
<td>Culture is cooperative, collaborative, and supportive. Focus is on anticipating members’ future needs and doing scenario plans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To provide a framework of the social system surrounding the Frankenmuth AAUW, I reviewed the literature on the cultural environments of the community of Frankenmuth, the parent AAUW organization, and the history as recorded by the members of the Frankenmuth branch. Using evidence from various sources including organizational minutes, archives, correspondence, and websites expands understanding about how the parts work together, and how the relationships between the elements in a system influence the behavior and challenge assumptions about how the world works.

The research issues chapter also related theories and research on significant societal changes, feminism, organizational change, and change leadership.
My dual role, as AAUW Frankenmuth branch president and researcher, allowed me to set agendas and plan meetings focusing on various change strategies and opportunities. Standardized assessment tools were offered to the membership, such as using the Affinity Diagram (Brassard & Ritter, 1994) and the Legacy Worksheet (DePass-Shuler et al., 2001), but were rejected by association members as too time consuming and arduous. I also modeled behaviors, such as building a shared vision, anticipating members' needs, and learning from mistakes and errors. I recorded the consequences of and data relating to these actions and initiatives in a journal, beginning in June 2001 and continuing through May 10, 2002. In addition to the journal, I kept a contact log of all my interactions with the AAUW stakeholders; it is a register of all emails, phone calls, and mail correspondence. These two tools, the journal and the correspondence record, provided evidence that stimulated awareness of and thoughtful reflection of the actions and decisions made by association members. To be aware is to allow one's attention to expand and broaden, to understand what is happening as it is happening (Isaacs, 1999).

An additional research approach was to actively participate in the AAUW events whenever possible. I attended the international convention in Ottawa, Canada (August 2001), and the regional meeting in Owosso, Michigan (November 2001), and also traveled to Traverse City, Michigan (March 2002), to research a potential program initiative. These activities were in addition to attending various committee meetings, monthly board meetings, and membership and community program presentations, as well as representing the branch at various community functions.

Participatory-action research uses an emerging design process, meaning that many of the research methodologies evolve over time with the study. This process of
participating and studying an object simultaneously can significantly influence the object. Action researchers in their own organizations explore links between theory and practice, enhance identification options, assist decision making, and engage organizational members in ongoing reflection and feedback as to how to better meet desired objectives (Holian, 1999). The object, in this case the Frankenmuth area branch of the AAUW, can evolve as the research evolves. In this study, the research and investigative process helped branch members gain knowledge in areas such as organizational behavior, other women’s groups, and the national AAUW organization.

The action research cycle consists at least of intention or planning before action, and review or critique afterwards. Action research often starts with a fuzzy question and methodology, with succeeding cycles adding clarity (Dick & Mahony, 1993). Throughout the research period, June 2001 through May 2002, my investigative process was to review meeting minutes, research and write about the organization’s history, and examine my journal notes from the study duration. I sought to identify patterns of behavior and understand the conditions that led to the board’s decision. What emerged was a natural delineation of three distinct cycles defined by major organizational events or meetings. The first cycle began following the spring planning retreat on June 15, 2001, and ended with the strategic planning “gatherings” on October 13, 2001. Cycle 2 began immediately following the gatherings, October 14, 2001, to March 2, 2002, when a significant budget committee meeting took place. I determined cycle 3, March 3, 2002, to May 10, 2002, to be from the budget committee meeting to the decision by the board to hold the May 28, 2002, meeting with the intent of considering various organizational options.
This study used an emergent, exploratory, and inductive qualitative approach. Because the basis of such an approach is one that did not predetermine or delimit the directions the investigation took, it is especially important to detail the specific process that the research identified in addressing the question of organizational change. I first identified the significant decisions made by the organizational leadership within the research period, including only decisions made by the entire group. For ease in comprehension and greater understanding, I categorized these decisions by their relationship to the eight organizational themes that I identified in my research on organizational paradigms (Huba & Freed, 2000; DePass-Shuler, Dyer, & Meyers, 2001). The eight key themes are: knowledge structure, leadership, communication, learning, success, risk taking, goal setting, and organizational culture. Then, I compared the decisions within the three learning cycles to determine whether the group made the majority of their decisions from a member-centered or an organization-centered paradigm.

**Ethical Considerations**

The primary sample used for the study was based on the natural selection of all paid members of the Frankenmuth branch of the AAUW from June 2001 through May 10, 2002. Because I used historical data to better understand cultural influences, all former Frankenmuth AAUW members, community stakeholders, and AAUW members from the national and state associations indirectly contributed to this study.

This study met all the conditions of and received approval from the Human Subjects Review Board at Andrews University. The research project did not place subjects at more than minimal risk and was conducted in an established, commonly
accepted educational setting. All primary participants signed a general consent form indicating their willingness to have the information they provided included in the study. In addition, the results have been made available for their review and will become part of the organization's archive.

Assumptions and Researcher Bias

Because the major thrust of participatory-action research is to reunite that which has been divided by traditional research, that is knowledge and practical/moral concerns, there can be no such thing as objective or disinterested research and researchers. Research is thereby directed at both the understanding and the practical transformation of the organization or environment being studied. If the regulative ideal of the natural sciences is objectivity, for participatory-action research it is the integration of knowledge and purposeful action (Smith, 1990; Sohng, 1995). In the ideal situation, according to Brown (1985), the researcher already lives in the community and partakes in its affairs. As an active and engaged resident of Frankenmuth, witnessed through my membership and volunteer effort in several service organizations, my community involvement meets Brown's definition of an ideal situation.

It is important to recognize that, as the incoming branch president, I had the organizational authority and responsibility to facilitate change. My personal level of commitment was high because of this study, so in many ways my term as AAUW president was not comparable to the efforts and initiatives of past AAUW presidents.

Also, it is relevant to readers of this study to know that my past work experience includes being the executive director of a regional tourist association when the board
elected to dissolve the association in 1991. Therefore, I have had some direct experience leading an organization down a path of profound change.

**Study Limitations**

This is the first known participatory-action research project for an AAUW branch or similar local women's community organization. Because similar studies were unavailable, most sources and research I used pertained to corporate, for-profit organizational behavior. I was selective in choosing information relevant to both voluntary nonprofit and for-profit organizations, but this study could be further enhanced through additional research of the variables in the two environments.

Sustaining profound change is a cycle that never ends, moving as it does through the phases of intellectual understanding, emotional engagement, and sustained action (Pierce, 1999). Profound change and learning are long-term processes. I sought to enhance the research by incorporating data from the Frankenmuth AAUW's 27-year organizational history. Although the 11-month research period was significant to measure the initial learning that took place, further study is needed to determine the sustainability of the profound change and shift in the decision-making paradigm.

**Validity**

Validity can be defined in a number of ways, and what is considered to be the validity standard and adequate measure is closely linked to the matter of the research paradigm. Predictive generalizability and repeatability are not particularly useful concepts in qualitative research when the objective is learning from understanding, rather than forming general rules about other's behavior (Holian, 1999).
The idealistic view of objectivity of science is a difficult one to maintain in light of historical (Kuhn, 1962) and philosophical arguments brought against it in recent years (Sohng, 1995). Scholars and activists in many fields and many parts of the world have put forward convincing criticisms of the "myth" of objectivity in all scientific knowledge (Foucault, 1973; Gergen, 1988; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Harding, 1991; Rosaldo, 1989; Sohng, 1995).

Participatory-action research is considered part of the field research mode of observation, meaning that there is strength in the validity of the research, through examining the subtle nuances in attitudes and behaviors and examining social processes over time. However, there is also the potential problem of reliability. Concepts do not have any meaning other than what people give them (Babbie, 2001). The action researcher’s role as participant/observer is that of someone who attempts to explore their own culture (Holian, 1999).

To strengthen this study’s reliability and explain the meaning of concepts, I sought information that could be verified by more than one source. I also compared my journal entries with minutes of the board and membership meetings, and other historical evidence. Because I sought different perspectives, some of my journal entries include input and feedback from colleagues and other AAUW members. I purposely ignored examples and experiences that were isolated to the board, including only decisions made by the entire group. Last, two outside readers, former presidents of the Frankenmuth AAUW branch and current members, read and reviewed this study for accuracy and validity of the information presented.
In addition to the journal entries, the recorded board and meeting minutes, newsletters, and correspondence provided further evidence for the study. Other individuals carried out two of the record-keeping processes; the secretary wrote the organization minutes, and the newsletter editor created and edited the branch newsletter.

Participatory-action research's fundamental claim to being a valid process lies in its emphasis on experiential and personal encounters. This dimension of validity concerns the skills and sensitivities of the researcher, how one uses oneself as a knower, as an inquirer (Reason & Rowan, 1981; Sohng, 1995). The quality of awareness and trustworthiness of the researcher's insight, the adequacy of reflexivity, and the soundness of inference drawn from interpersonal communications are critical dimensions of validity (Heron, 1988). Argyris (1968) underscored the importance of interpersonal validity, suggesting that interpersonal openness and trust are key to achieving high interobserver reliability, although these concerns have received little attention in traditional research.

**Generalizability**

In participatory-action research, the path from knowledge generation to knowledge utilization is direct. Often in participatory-action research, what is investigated is not a theory to be applied but rather the ways of implementing a practical idea (Horton, 1990; Sohng, 1995). The uniqueness of any qualitative study, especially participatory-action research, mitigates the exact replicability of that study in another context.

Researchers seeking the exact replication of a participatory-action study also face the challenge of the variability of relationships among the participants. Nystrom (1990) researched the causes of organizational commitment and determined that the quality of
the relationship with one’s boss (organizational leader) was three times more powerful in predicting organizational commitment than were other variables (as cited in Larkin & Larkin, 1994). Although the relationship of the researcher with fellow participants affects the generalizability of the results, knowing the central assumptions, selection of subjects, and the biases and values of the researcher enhances the possibility of replicating the study in another setting (Creswell, 1994).

Summary

Participatory-action research is a form of inquiry into how we design action and how we might create better organizations (Putnam, 2000b, Theory of Action section). During the 11 months of the study, from June 2001 through May 10, 2002, I implemented various organizational-change methods in an attempt to understand, improve, and lead the Frankenmuth area AAUW to greater success. The resulting decision by the board to consider four new organizational models came about through the intellectual understanding and emotional engagement of organization members.

In Chapter 4, I show how the group’s decision making changed from an organization-centered perspective to a member-centered approach throughout three learning cycles identified in the study. To compare the three learning cycles, I segmented the decision-making process into eight organizational themes: knowledge structure, leadership, communication, learning, success, risk taking, goal setting, and organizational culture.
CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY FINDINGS

Introduction

It has been said that if you drop a frog into a pot of boiling water, it will instinctively jump out. But if you place that same frog in a pot of cool water and gradually increase the temperature, the frog won't notice. It will sit there until the water boils, boiling right along with it. Like this frog, many organizational leaders become insensitive to changes in their environments, accepting negative climates and cultures as customary. They are comfortable using the past as a measure of future success and prefer any "known" to the "unknown." As the heat continues to rise, these leaders barely notice the change, making decisions to stay in the hot water at all costs rather than chance life outside the pot (Goleman et al., 2002). To carry the metaphor forward, my purpose in this study was to better understand the paradigm shift that takes place, signaling the frog that it is time to jump from the pot. If it jumps early enough, our amphibian friend can save both itself and the water (the organization) from getting spoiled.

In addition to saving the frog and the water, we can also help save future frogs from boiling by studying shifts in people's values and accompanying shifts in processes, strategies, and practices. Science seeks to improve and refine the knowledge of the past based on new observations and interpretations (Shermer, 1997).
Current thinking about organizational learning and change is based on assumptions about the roles of the organization and its members, the type of environment or culture that supports organizational growth, and how people learn. For half a century, researchers have been studying the way the human mind functions in making decisions. Such research, in the field and in the laboratory, has revealed that people use unconscious routines to cope with the complexity inherent in most decisions (Hammond, Keeney, & Raiffa. 1998). The decisions made by AAUW members were also influenced by environmental factors including the cultural influences of the dominant Judeo-Christian values of the Frankenmuth community, the hierarchical perspective of the national and state organizations, and as a product of its own organizational history. In chapter 2, I identified these cultural domains and other relevant social factors, such as the mixed messages of the feminist movement, which have unseen influence affecting members' decision-making behavior.

My purpose in this study was to design, implement, and assess the initial change and growth of a local voluntary organization. Kuhn (1996) and others have pointed out that every significant breakthrough in science is first a break with tradition, old ways of thinking, and old paradigms (Franklin Covey Company. 1998). Through the process of participatory-action research, I sought to identify the paradigm shift that moved members of a 27-year-old voluntary organization from a static position to consider significant organizational change. The research concerns how the group's decision making changed from an organization-centered perspective to a member-centered approach throughout three learning cycles identified in the study. To compare the three learning cycles, I segmented the decision-making process into eight organizational themes: knowledge
structure, leadership, communication, learning, success, risk taking, goal setting, and organizational culture.

Research Findings

My research officially began on June 14, 2000, although I have been a member of the Frankenmuth AAUW since 1998 and joined the board as college and university representative the following year. My history with the AAUW includes becoming the program chair in 1999-2000, president-elect in 2000-2001, and president in 2001-2002.

This study was undertaken to identify key themes during the research period indicating a profound change took place in both the individuals and their decisions regarding the association. The eight themes that were explored are knowledge structure, leadership, communication, learning, success, risk taking, goal setting, and organizational culture.

Cycle 1: June 15, 2001, to October 13, 2001

My research began at the spring planning retreat, on the heels of the 25th anniversary year of the organization. The AAUW Frankenmuth board of directors arranges an annual spring planning session to review the past year, revisit goals and objectives, integrate new officers, and lay out the vision for the next year. This meeting typically takes place in the president’s home, offering a nurturing environment attuned to introducing new ideas and ways of thinking.

The planning meeting got off to a rough start when the survey I designed did not work effectively. Some people did not follow the instructions and answered the questions using an opposite ranking system: that is instead of using a 5 for very interested...
they assumed they should use a 1. In addition, only 8 out of 41 members returned the
survey. Once we decided not to use the survey, those in attendance started talking about
the key themes the survey had been intended to identify. These included: Who does the
AAUW currently serve? Whom should we serve in the future? and Where would you
like the AAUW to help you learn and grow in the future?

The meeting gained momentum, generating feelings of enthusiasm and hope. The
energy was palpable as we built on each other's ideas and made plans for the future. This
drove the creation of an important communication tool, a new newsletter, the first issue
of which came out in July. We made plans for an exciting and positive year, starting with
programs that would begin in September. The atmosphere was conducive to taking risks
and looking forward to the future, leading us to believe that change was possible within
the existing structure because we were all recommitted to each other and the
organization.

The next significant event that took place was the AAUW's August art fair. From
an organizational viewpoint, the art fair had become a fairly low maintenance, self-
perpetuating fundraiser. In 2001, the local park used by the branch was unavailable, and
the alternative site was well off Main Street, hidden from natural street traffic. Also, the
weather that day was unbearably hot. The situation was so bad that many vendors left the
same day they arrived. The board ultimately voted to send a small refund to many of the
vendors as a token of our appreciation and an attempt to maintain a positive relationship.

Following the event, the group appointed a committee to review various art fair
and fundraising options. They concluded that we did not have the resources to hold the
event at a location other than the original park on Main Street. This led to a
recommendation and subsequent support by the membership to eliminate the activity. One thing we did not do was to look at the organizational system that allowed such a crisis to take place. As a volunteer organization, relationships are often held supreme to the mission of the organization or accountability to members.

In hindsight, losing this event became a pivotal turning point for the organization. The experiences of members in helping with the art fair were ritualistic, held with tradition, and provided a sense of ownership, because the group had been organizing it for 20 years. It also offered the group an identity and purpose in the Frankenmuth community. Although the event was not directly linked to the mission, the money raised allowed donations to causes relating to the organization’s mission, it brought members together without much personal investment, and sharing the values of art and artistic pleasure was a passion of some the AAUW members.

In August I attended the IFUW’s international conference in Ottawa with two AAUW of Michigan board members. The meeting brought together women from around the globe who were facing many of the same issues that the AAUW was facing—aging membership, a traditional organizational paradigm, and constriction by the dominant culture. The convention was geared to the active IFUW participant, offering few practical resources for an individual representing a small branch in mid-Michigan.

My journal from August 29, 2001, points out that the board unanimously agreed to change our name to Frankenmuth area AAUW. The hope was that this change would increase awareness. Although the group sought new members, it resisted considering a change in membership requirements. Also, we postponed the enhancement of our membership directory. We had decided in June that an expanded directory could be a
powerful tool in networking with members outside of the association’s planned activities if it included more information about each of the members and what we like to do. All of the programs were set for the entire year, even though in June we talked about the importance of remaining flexible and able to change. I noted that my short-term goal was to get new people involved on the board.

On September 9, I sent the following message to the board via email and also brought copies to the subsequent board meeting:

Dear Board members,

Our plan to provide a “transitional” meeting on October 10 is being further postponed, due to a suggestion by our facilitator, David Rausch. He believes that I should conduct or locate market research regarding how many potential members we have and who they are. Therefore, our October 10 meeting will be just a regular board meeting. Once I have found or conducted the research, we will schedule a meeting and have some fun! Until then . . .

Over the past couple months I’ve participated in some exciting individual and collective conversations. The following is an attempt to bring some of the ideas and thoughts to a place that will help us begin implementing some of these great ideas I’ve tried to capture the essence of the idea, along with updating you on any progress thus far. A combination of these is hoped to help us meet the needs of diverse members (young and not-so-young), provide financial resources and meet our mission: by doing that we hope to see continued growth—both in the membership and the individuals supporting AAUW.

**AAUW 2001–2002 Initiatives**

**Art Fair/Arts Council:** Several members (Sharril, Laurajeanne, and Carole) are interested in finding a way to continue this cornerstone club activity. Many options will be reviewed and considered by the committee (who also includes Robine and Tracy). Their first meeting is September 17, 2001.

**Wreath Sale/Scholarships:** Our annual fall wreath sale provides the financial backing for our scholarship program. Marsha Gainer has offered to chair the wreath sale committee and Karen Frahm has agreed to chair scholarship activities.

**Tutoring/Coaching:** Mary McEwen suggested that we look into tutoring as a means of raising funds and providing a valuable community and educational service. She has spoken with Linda Howard, Community Education Director. Linda is working
on creating a "latchkey" program for students—an after school program with various activities, that could include tutoring. Tracy has spoken with List Elementary Principal, Mary Anne Ackerman, and she is very excited about the idea.

**KinderGarden:** LauraJeanne Kehn, AAUW member and Herb Society President, is the originator of this idea. One approach under consideration is to begin by putting together a steering committee of Frankenmuth community members. These people could include school personnel and board members, the city gardener, Frankenmuth Mutual’s Gardener, City Beautification members, other service club members and business representatives. Their role would be to help develop a plan to create a garden that would be integrated into the school curriculum (science, math, art?) and serve as a catalyst for a variety of other projects. Some of these "other projects" include the cultural/heritage aspects of gardening, plant a row for the hungry, the spiritual aspects of gardening, local restaurants and their connection to food and integrating it with Saginaw Valley’s rural roots (forgive the pun!). The AAUW’s role of bringing together the steering committee. Facilitating the other committees would give us a very visible community project, tied to our mission, which would have a lasting impact.

**Networking/Mentoring:** Developing the AAUW as a powerful networking and mentoring organization is thought to be a way to add value to lives of our busy members. Additionally, both Judy Keller and Sue Piesko have mentioned the need for more women active in city government. One way to begin is through expanding our membership directory to include information about interests, specialties and life situations—where people work, other places they volunteer, what their families look like. In addition, we talked about providing educational opportunities that will help individuals reach their goals—but first we have to find ways to identify what those individual goals are!

**Elderly Aunt:** We may want to give this a different title—but I mean no disrespect. The AAUW has the potential to offer services and programs that help women in our community find financial ways to allow their personal legacies to continue. Similar to the Museum’s “Heritage Campaign” which created a long-term funding source and encourages people to leave money to it in their wills. The Gifting Program that Deb Hardin initiated spoke to the financial needs of women—maybe we can fill a niche and combining the two needs.

On September 1, 2001, I received an email from national inviting members to participate in electronic work groups. The national membership committee hoped to learn about targeting younger women for the AAUW membership, assisting branches with large membership declines, exploring alternative ways of affiliating with AAUW, and identifying what was working for branch membership recruitment. Although none of our
members decided to participate. I contacted the AAUW membership vice-president who was coordinating this activity to see if the results might be available for my study. She told me that she "should be receiving their reports sometime in May—and the membership committee will act on them in early June" (email correspondence, April 23, 2002).

This email from national prompted me to email our state membership representative to ask if she could offer any suggestions regarding membership recruitment. AAUW of Michigan membership chairperson Ruth Brown said she would "be in touch with anything that would be helpful" (email correspondence, September 25, 2001). I did not receive any further emails or suggestions from her.

This first research cycle began with the group's spring planning retreat. Although behind-the-scenes plans for future programs and correspondence take place, the summer is a time of little visible activity for the organization. The first program/membership meeting of the year is held in September (the organization's fiscal year is July 1 to June 30). Overall during this cycle, email and contact indicated optimism, as reflected by Carole Grates's comments: "I keep feeling the energy. It is very exciting. Keep up the good work" (email correspondence, September 20, 2001). During these 4 months, the communication from the state and national organizations focused on issues concerning their programs and initiatives, such as the Equal Rights Amendment, the WOMB (Woman Against Michigan Bureaucracy) rally, and AAUW's 21st Century Recognition program. The one exception was the opportunity to participate in an on-line chat with the executive director on September 25, 2001. No further information was given following the chat for those who were unable to participate.
Summarizing the information from this first research cycle, Table 1 identifies each organizational theme, research evidence for that theme, and the paradigm the evidence matches—either organization- or member-centered. Organizationally, the Frankenmuth AAUW began in an organization-centered paradigm for each theme. Does the evidence show a shift in people’s values, aspirations, and behaviors combined with a shift in outer processes, strategies, practices, and systems? The selected themes are explained in detail in the Research Results section of this chapter. The importance of this table is that it shows the predominance of an organization-paradigm. In 10 of the 13 evidence indicators (77%), the group responded by honoring the organization instead of the members.

**Cycle 2: October 14, 2001, to March 2, 2002**

Cycle 2 began with three “gathering” meetings in early October 2001 at my home and ended in early March 2002. This period again began with great enthusiasm on the part of almost all members, especially those who had attended the brainstorming meetings. I contacted every member of the group by telephone and email in an attempt to get their valuable feedback. This was especially important if they were going to be unable to attend one of the three gatherings, which we scheduled at strategic times in an effort to accommodate various lifestyles. Although I was unable to talk personally with every member, 22 out of the 35 members attended the meetings.

My article, *President’s Message: Framing the Options*, in the November 2001 newsletter explained the results of the gatherings and offered a glimpse into my leadership style. It appears below in its entirety:
Table 3  

*Cycle 1 Paradigm Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Evidence Indicator</th>
<th>Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge structure</td>
<td>Maintained traditional hierarchy</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Board and core group of members primary decision makers</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State and national focus Initiatives</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Traditional program format</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membership directory—postpone enhancing</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Did not make any organizational changes as a result of losing the Art Fair</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback to IFUW</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Success measured by membership growth, fiscal soundness, and community visibility</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk taking</td>
<td>Did not create an alternative fundraising event to replace the Art Fair</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>Goals focused on improving existing organization through traditional means</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture</td>
<td>Optimistic attitude</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**President's Message: FRAMING THE OPTIONS**

In addition to many laughs, new stories to tell and the fact that my house stayed clean for a whole week—our rejuvenating October “Gatherings” provided us with useful insight, guiding the creation of the following goals. These statements provide a beginning to help us collectively work towards our mission in a productive, responsible and proactive manner.

In case you’ve forgotten, the AAUW mission is to promote Equity for all women and girls, Lifelong education and Positive societal change. Our initial focus is on eligible
members as our customers, graduates who hold a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited institution recognized by the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) and Undergraduates enrolled in a regionally accredited educational institution shall be eligible for student affiliation.

2001–2002 AAUW Frankenmuth GOALS

1. Identify strengths, resources and common interests of existing members
2. Improve communication with existing members and potential members
3. Improve communication with community and AAUW stakeholders
4. Promote organizational focus as Frankenmuth area educational advocate
5. Review budget, dues structure and financial resources

Each goal includes strategies (available just by asking) providing details that are specific, achievable, and results-oriented. Our organizational focus is on “being” not just “doing,” balancing what members want with what each of us is willing to give.

This challenge requires YOUR commitment to AAUW in order to succeed. You can help through your active involvement in

* seeking partnerships for AAUW–projects, events, learning opportunities
* volunteering your time and supporting existing branch programs and activities
* encouraging others to join in our mission–share the excitement!

Making a positive difference in the lives of those around you by actively working for equality for future generations of women and girls is an enormous task. For me, it is those two amazing little girls in my life, my own daughters, that inspire me to change the world for the better–I encourage you to find your inspiration and make a difference!

During Cycle 2, AAUW national sent branch presidents a Change Management Tool Kit (DePass-Shuler et al., 2001). The information in the kit was based on research from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and the ASAE Foundation’s report, Facing the Future: A Report on the Major Trends and Issues Affecting Associations (2001). The kit explains a shift that an association may experience in relation to each of the 14 major trends, provides a change-register worksheet, and identifies the active involvement required from multiple levels of an association in order to facilitate change. The document further states that

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AAUW’s challenge is to identify those trends most relevant to our future and successfully implement and manage the changes that these trends require. ASAE’s 1998 environmental scan reaffirms the need for associations to reshape themselves to remain competitive and relevant to their members and the public. For many, radical shifts rather than incremental changes will be required. (DePass-Shuler et al., 2001, p. 3)

According to the information in the kit, organizational change requires the active involvement of multiple levels within the organization, including people from senior management, the change team, and stakeholders. Further, the organizational culture is important. “If this level is not aligned with the desired changes, change will not take, and it will not last” (DePass-Shuler et al., 2001, p. 20). Former Frankenmuth president Carole Grates agreed with me that the information was relevant and valuable, but neither one of us found an effective and practical way to apply it. Based on our current efforts to gather information and understand our members, the level of member investment in the change process prescribed in the kit was unrealistic.

In October, former president Carole Grates and I attended the district Branch to Branch meeting in Owosso, Michigan. Our November board minutes state that she and I “reported on the meeting in Owosso at which representatives of about six branches outlined their special projects. Several good ideas were obtained for the future” (Bassett, 2001b). My journal tells a more complete picture, and in hindsight I wish the minutes reflected this perspective. Yes, we did obtain some good ideas, so that part of the minutes is accurate. But overall, the meeting was indicative of larger organizational issues concerning membership involvement, focus, and culture. Only 30 women, out of 572 district members, attended the meeting. This fact was not even recognized, let alone discussed. The meeting was designed for speakers from various branches to share program ideas that had worked for them. With this approach, the past is assumed to
predict the future, and it is difficult for new learning or possible future scenario building to take place.

The December board minutes (Bassett, 2001a) show that we decided to discuss the goals and their accompanying measurements garnered from the gathering sessions at future board meetings. We were unable to implement this plan when board members did not read the results from the gatherings. At the January board meeting (Bassett, 2002e) I suggested that, rather than having a laundry list of goals and objectives, it would make more sense if we all just focused on membership and reported back to each other at future board meetings. In my mind, new members equated to new ideas. This approach also came up empty, as only one new member joined during the 11-month research period.

My journals from December show that I became increasingly frustrated with the barriers to change and limits to growth. Many board members were disconnected from what they said they wanted and their personal commitment or ability to get involved. In addition, some were quick to find reasons things would not work instead of investigating and exploring ways to make things happen. These same members would criticize me for “doing too much,” but they did not help to find alternate solutions. The lack of dialogue was apparent. I even mentioned “reconsidering my dissertation topic” because of my feelings of helplessness and impotence to facilitate significant change.

This is also the time we began working on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Women’s Initiative. My contact log shows that this program required a significant investment of time and attention. During the 6 months we worked on the project, I made a total of 467 contacts in the form of emails, phone conversations, or letters. This represents 30% of the total contacts I made during this study. I also

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participated in several meetings, both with our school superintendent and our local committee, consisting of three Frankenmuth AAUW members. Also, I was available and on call for the week the MIT representatives were in town, attending an evening dinner and two school presentations. The program was deemed a success. It provided an opportunity for our branch to help more than 250 girls, network with three intermediate school districts, and garner significant coverage in the local papers.

My January journal entries identify some key turning points. I stated that the board meeting was more fun with the introduction of “IDY,” the light bulb—a traveling trophy (literally, a light bulb) that I brought and awarded to the person with the “brightest” new idea. I also recorded that I consciously worked not to focus on my vision and agenda for the organization, but rather tried to share the responsibility and suggested we flatten the hierarchical pyramid. Several board members could not accept that a different structural design would work. They skeptically received my idea of shared leadership, believing that a different decision-making process would lead to anarchy. My personal satisfaction came, not from their reaction, but rather from recognizing the need and proposing the idea. I also tried to be proactive by appointing our president-elect as the nominating chair. My hope was that, if the early search for possible new board members for the April election came up empty, we could then have time to respond. I also reflected on my shift from managing to leading. I devoted significant time to planning for the meeting, consciously deciding to present information on the “how’s,” not the “what’s.” My journal also attests to time I spent reading books on dialogue, systems thinking, and other resources relating to change. My last paragraph is prophetic:

It’s interesting to see the themes that appear in this journal. All stuff I know I am aware of, the new piece of the puzzle is not in the awareness of the necessity of
purpose, but finding a way for the group to integrate it. I’m certain there is an adult learning theory to correspond with this phenomenon (will have to find it for the dissertation) that you can’t just tell people we need a purpose. Leaders must create the conditions so that the group can identify and get behind the purpose; a purpose they collaboratively define. This sounds so basic, but in practice it is a real bugger. Why is this such a difficult hurdle? Maybe it is because it goes along with resistance theory (not sure if this is the correct name), giving up and following the energy instead of resisting. Channeling energy, like skiing, sailing, or other sports where you as the participant are at the will of mother nature and you ride the wind!!

The AAUW of Michigan offered local branches a partnership opportunity to work with the Michigan Gender Equity Team (MGET). The MGET is a coalition of 18 groups, including NOW, Zonta, and the Women’s Sports Foundation, working with local school districts regarding Title IX compliance. Frankenmuth membership chairperson Pat Arvilla collaborated with the local school superintendent to gather the requested information with the intention of including it in the report on Title IX compliance in Michigan school districts. Because Title IX was a litigious issue in Michigan, it was especially important that this information not be misused, prompting Pat to inquire about the format and organization of the report. Tom Wilson, MGET coordinator, told her, “To be honest, the exact format of the report will be defined in the immediate future” (email correspondence, February 13, 2002).

Also, in February 2002, the national association launched an AAUW/NEA (National Education Association) bullying awareness program. The purpose of the program was to provide training to help communities develop ways to reduce and eventually eradicate sexual harassment and bullying in America’s schools. Bullying and sexual harassment had recently come to the forefront of Frankenmuth schools, so the school district was interested in programs designed to help with these problems. I emailed AAUW’s national organization asking for specifics such as cost, time, and so on.
in order to gather information for the decision makers in the school district and on the AAUW board. The national organization responded by resending the same information I originally had received. This led me to resubmit my questions, but I did not receive any further response.

During Cycle 2, the shift to more of a member-centered focus began to take place (see Table 4). Sixteen instances are offered as evidence of the decision-making mind-set relating to the Frankenmuth AAUW. The shift was beginning to take place: during Cycle 1 only 23% of the decisions were from a member-centered paradigm, whereas in Cycle 2 6 of the 16 decisions (38%) show thinking from this new perspective.


The third cycle began with a March 3, 2002, meeting of the budget committee, president-elect Debra Hardin, treasurer Robine Pollick, and me. The loss of income from the art fair necessitated an evaluation of the logic and purpose of financial decisions, including donations, the scholarship, and the money we sent to AAUW’s national organization. We created a new budget, eliminating all unnecessary expenditures, including donations. Our logic was that, until we could better identify our future needs, we had a responsibility to be fiscally conservative. This led to a discussion about the future of the organization. We determined that, if we stayed on the same course indefinitely, future growth looked bleak. Much of the conversation was prompted by the fact that Debra realized she would be expected to lead the organization in 2 years. She began asking herself and us some difficult questions about the organization’s purpose, effectiveness, and future. My journal reflects the excitement I felt following the meeting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Evidence Indicator</th>
<th>Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge structure</td>
<td>Maintained traditional hierarchy</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Board and core group of members primary decision makers</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AAUW of Michigan (Title IX)</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AAUW national</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Newsletter created to transmit information</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional program format</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gathering meetings</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Unable to apply Change Management Kit</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gatherings</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Gatherings</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MIT Women's Initiative</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk taking</td>
<td>Gathering follow-through after the meetings</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>Optimistic attitude</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture</td>
<td>Gatherings</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Owosso Branch-to-Branch meeting</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December journal–attitudes</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the budget committee reported the proposed budget at the March board meeting (Bassett, 2002b), the financial changes and our concerns about the future of the group prompted a discussion about possible corrective measures. Although the board had talked about this topic ad nauseam, the difference this time was the intensity and sense of urgency. No formal action was taken that night, but the conversation seemed to open many people’s eyes.
Debra called me later to share her hopelessness about the organization in its current form and her belief that we should seriously consider dissolving it (personal correspondence, February 19, 2002). Her blunt and candid assessment of the situation prompted me to request a meeting with two charter members, Carole Grates and Marilyn Frahm, who were recent presidents and organizational leaders. On February 26, 2002, Carole, Marilyn, and I came to the conclusion that we should begin to make the membership aware of this critical situation. We began with a letter and planned a membership vote on the organization’s future for the May meeting. In the meantime, we would research other women’s organizations, exploring options that would allow us to continue to support the basic mission of the AAUW in a positive and purposeful environment.

Also following the conversation at the March board meeting, two board members volunteered to provide refreshments at the March membership meeting in an attempt to create a more social and friendly atmosphere. Although the minutes from both meetings show that the programs were well received by those in attendance, the length of the programs did not allow for a formal membership meeting (Bassett, 2002c).

On April 2, 2002, I sent the following email message to members who had email and sent it in the form of a letter to those without Internet access:

Dear Members: I hope this message finds you enjoying the Easter break in some warm place—whether that be in Florida or the arms of those you love! :-) I’m emailing this message in addition to it appearing in our newsletter because of the critical nature of where we stand as an organization. Where do YOU want AAUW to make a difference in your life or the lives of your children or grandchildren? Please feel free to contact me or any of our board members prior to our meetings. 
All the best, Tracy

TURNING POINT For Frankenmuth AAUW

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The approaching AAUW annual election once again raises the question of Who will serve? The hard reality is that few of our members are willing and/or able to get involved in the decision-making processes of our Branch. We all agree that there is still much more to be done to help women and girls achieve educational equality. The dilemma we face is how we, and our dwindling membership, can best organize to accomplish this objective. At our March board meeting we discussed possible ways to revitalize AAUW. Our recent history includes moving the meeting dates and times, strategic planning gatherings, monthly programs, etc. Sadly, our efforts have resulted in bringing in few new members, new people critical for new ideas, resources and different perspectives. In addition, our current financial position is reduced to a maintenance level due to the loss of the Art Fair income. An ongoing conversation continues among members committed to building a better, stronger AAUW, yet we are at a crossroads. After years of searching and trying various plans, we know there are no easy answers. The organization's evolution requires a significant redesign. In April our annual dinner features an exciting and talented speaker, Bob Freimuth, who is certain to help us in this crisis by providing us with some useful tools to make the very difficult decisions that we face. We hope you will join us that evening. Then May 28th at 6:00 at Mancino's all members are requested to gather to decide about the future of Frankenmuth Area AAUW.

This message prompted emails from five members sharing their concerns about the situation (personal correspondence, May 2002). Each offered general suggestions for ways to avoid dissolving and expressed her support of my presidency during this difficult transition.

Despite the pending meeting, group members continued to work on organizational projects. In April 2002, the branch proposed collaborating with a local cancer support group to offer an October evening seminar designed to provide comprehensive information on the topic of breast cancer awareness. We suggested including the film, *My Left Breast*, which presents the treatment and aftermath of the disease in a realistic and positive way, focusing on the importance of the caregiver. The local support group rejected the proposal because of the lesbian couple in the film; they said they could not be involved with something that featured an alternative lifestyle.
The next significant communication regarding our crisis situation was my speech at the annual dinner on April 23, 2002:

As you know, our organization is facing a transition. At our membership meeting on May 28 we will be deciding the future structure of AAUW. You may be wondering how we got to this point—for on the surface we look a lot like we have for the last 27 years (number of members, budget, etc.). Quite frankly, that is the problem. Your board believes that if we do not grow and change we are going to die. Rather than stay on life-support or worse to die a slow, painful death, we are looking for ways to find a cure—a "miracle cure" that will breathe life back into the women of this community, adding value, helping make the lives of all women and girls better.

At the May meeting at Mancino's your board will present three organizational options for discussion, dissection and modification. It is our intent, by the end of that meeting, no matter how many grinders or glasses of wine it takes, to vote to make a significant structural change to this organization. What that looks like is up to you.

Since we do not expect to take any formal action tonight, I encourage you to talk and share ideas following the business portion of this meeting. There are lots of options (including 115 organizations found at www.womensorganizations.org)

In closing, I leave you with Gandhi's wish, "Let us become the change we hope to see in the world."

During this last research cycle, I was also actively writing and investigating resources for this study. As part of this process, I sought guidance and direction from the leaders of AAUW national. I asked AAUW executive director Jacqueline Woods, in an email on May 7, 2002, to "tell me what national is doing in the following specific areas outlined in their Change Management Tool Kit." I then named the six areas from her letter that appeared in the kit (p. v); they are: challenge and redefine organizational structures; deliver AAUW programs that reflect 21st century trends; maximize technology at all levels; develop and maintain strategic partnerships and collaborations; be fiscally responsible and entrepreneurial; and be advocates for equity, access, and change. She replied by sending me the following "Call to Action":

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American Association of University Women  
21st Century Call to Action  
January 2001

The mission of AAUW continues to be grounded in the promotion of equity, lifelong education, and positive societal change for all women and girls. In valuing these principles it is important that the organization and its membership seek to connect with both the traditional and contemporary needs of our communities. Our “21st Century Call to Action” is designed to be the platform for the organization to use in developing the specific agendas, goals and objectives that will guide our activities in effectively making strategic differences in education and equity for all women and girls.

We must commit ourselves to the creation of action plans that include the following:

1. Challenge our organizational structures—including our boards, state/regional organizations, branches and national staff—to establish clear performance standards and strategic plans that reflect shared visions and values, develop new team building strategies which includes understanding appropriate roles and responsibilities, and seek out new professional development opportunities which will be reinforced through regular review and assessment processes.

2. Develop and maintain program and operational strategies that support the new economy, growing domestic diversity, and global trends affecting the AAUW membership, its mission and the communities we serve.

3. Expand and incorporate the use of emerging technologies and new communication/marketing mechanisms into internal and external policy development and work plans for all programs and services.

4. Strategically expand and establish significant collaborations and partnerships with other associations, corporate, business and foundation entities and other education and equity organizations.

5. Create new entrepreneurial/revenue-generating strategies and activities, while remaining fiscally responsible for the base budgetary needs, for all major program and services offerings.

6. Promote and maintain a domestic and international advocacy agenda and public policy presence that reflects the compound but solidly connected visions of all three corporations of AAUW.

Jacqueline Woods mentioned in her email that she had prepared and disseminated this “Call to Action” when she came on board (December 2000). She further stated that it
was a delivery vehicle for all three corporations to use in getting out unified messages and that they have asked staff to use it in program development and budgeting. The “Call to Action” was also used by the national boards and the states and branches in goal setting and program development. Note that this document had been created in December 2000, before Woods became executive director, and she was still using it as her platform for change, 1½ years later. Also worth noting is that neither she nor any of the four AAUW staff members I contacted while conducting research for this dissertation inquired about this study or its results.

The following email came from Frankenmuth branch member and former branch president Carole Grates describing the shift that took place for her:

It has been a difficult year but one of personal growth for all of us. I was thinking also of the members who like our projects and our community support but do not make meetings due to family pressures or not really liking meetings. There are several members who have expressed this to me at different times. Finding a way to maintain this part of the organization may keep these people interested. Back to what I said last night, we can keep the same local mission regardless of the affiliation: service to our educational community and library, promotion of the growth of women and girls, and personal growth and knowledge of women’s issues in a more global sense. You see I have grown and changed too. Thanks! (email correspondence, May 9, 2002)

The final evidence for this study is the letter from the board that was sent to all members on May 10, 2002. It outlines four organizational options the board developed and planned to address at the meeting on May 28, 2002.

May 8, 2002

Dear AAUW Member:

Frankenmuth Area AAUW is facing the decision whether we will continue as an association and how that will look if we elect to proceed.

On May 28, 2002 at Mancino’s, 6:00 p.m., we will decide the next step for our civic group. After much discussion, your Board has constructed four organizational
options for members to consider. Your opinion is important - these suggestions can be amended, discarded, or modified at the upcoming meeting.

The board is proposing:

1. To maintain our affiliation with AAUW, but restructure significantly. This option REQUIRES a firm commitment and active participation in order for the new organizational design to be effective. A vote for this one option effectively means you volunteer.

2. Dissolve and affiliate with a different women’s group. The organization that is being considered is the Michigan Women’s Studies Association. A steering committee would be appointed to make critical transitional decisions.

3. Dissolve. Appoint a steering committee to make critical decisions.

4. Dissolve and form an entirely new organization, unaffiliated with any existing organizations.

Please RSVP to Tracy Weber at 652-8552 by May 21 to let us know whether you will be in attendance for this vitally important meeting. If we do not hear from you, expect a phone call! We need the input of all members in order to make the most effective decision regarding issues such as our assets, the future of the wreath sale and how best to inform our local community. Additionally, our by-laws require a quorum (25% of the members) to make this decision—your vote matters!

Sincerely.

Board of Directors of the Frankenmuth Area Branch of the AAUW

The profound shift from an organizational-centered paradigm to a member-centered paradigm approach is illustrated in Table 5. Thirteen out of the 15 evidence incidents (87%) reflected a new approach to thinking for the group.

Discussion of Research Results

Explanations of the evolution, change, and development of organizations must give primary attention to the factors that shape the patterns embracing both organization and environment in the broadest sense (Morgan, 1997). Chapter 2 identified the cultural
system, which affects the members of the Frankenmuth AAUW. As a means of categorizing the organizational paradigm of the decisions made by the AAUW leaders.

Table 5

*Cycle 3 Paradigm Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Evidence Incident</th>
<th>Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge structure</td>
<td>Consider various organizational structures</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>All interested members as decision makers</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budget committee proposal</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting of past president and current president</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State and national focus (NEA &amp; Call to Action)</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Newsletter created to transmit information</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional program format</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explore different program models</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Try to learn from the past and change to meet new lifestyles and needs of members</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>Questioning member value</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk taking</td>
<td>Put problems out there for discussion</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>My Left Breast</em> video proposal</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking about personal goals, ways AAUW can achieve organizational and individual missions</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>Optimistic attitude</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture</td>
<td>Refreshments at meetings by volunteers</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I identified eight themes and defined them in Table 2. These themes--knowledge structure, leadership, communication, learning, success, risk taking, goal setting, and organizational culture—were selected because they are broad, measurable themes found in the literature on organizational behavior. The following information will tie each of
these themes to the specific decisions identified in the research and relate them to the paradigms.

The first theme was identified as *knowledge structure*. This entails investigating the organization's process of acquiring knowledge, partially defined by the organizational structure. Throughout its history the Frankenmuth branch has maintained a traditional hierarchical structure, a pyramid in which decision making and information flow from the top down. During Cycle 3, the board members began synthesizing information and integrating what they were learning. Information about the national association, failed change efforts, and other women's groups helped them challenge their way of thinking and looking at the organization. This brought them to the point of engaging the membership, by asking them to consider four different organizational models for the future of the organization.

Whereas the national and state organizations continued to exemplify an organization-centered paradigm throughout the 11 months of this research, in Cycle 3, the budget committee meeting prompted the branch to shift from an organization-centered to a member-centered paradigm. In addition, the lack of members, new or current, to fill 2002-03 board positions meant that anyone willing to invest in the future of the organization became a leader. A core group of committed people built a shared vision. This began the search to find a means, and possibly a new organizational design, that would allow them to continue with the things they valued—the mission of helping women and girls with equity issues, supporting education for themselves and others, and maintaining their social relationships.
Although the creation and distribution of the newsletter in Cycle 1 was a significant communication tool, it facilitated messages from only one direction--from the board to the membership. The primary opportunity for members to communicate and have a voice in organizational decisions was at the program/membership meetings. The communication process switched when all members were contacted and many felt compelled to attend the May 28 meeting. This event helped the organization move from having a decision-making paradigm with passive receivers of information to one with members actively seeking knowledge and collaborating to build the organization's future.

The paradigm shift for learning is defined as the change that takes place when a group recognizes past traditions and programs need to change and evolve. In order to accomplish this, the decision makers must be willing to confront some of the barriers to transformation and growth. The members of the Frankenmuth AAUW made this shift when they decided to ask members to decide the organization's future. This is different from the first proposition, knowledge structure, in that it goes beyond the organizational framework and looks at organizational learning, regardless of the structure.

Before Cycle 1, the organization measured success by member retention, growth, and the subjective opinions of board members. The level of participation at the gathering sessions in Cycle 2 was not what defined the meeting's success. Rather, it was successful because of the intention and goals of understanding individual members' reasons for joining the group, and seeking to identify programs that would meet individual members' needs. The board's decision to vote on dissolution signaled a further change toward measuring the value defined by the association members. If one were to measure this
decision based on organizational statistics, the number of members at the time of the May 2002 meeting was 39 members, 3 more than the branch mean of 36 members.

The definition of risk taking includes the perspective of the risk takers. Are the decision makers seeking to reinforce their existing worldview? Further, is the effort intended to find the right answers, or are they focusing on asking better questions? Similarly, does the risk taking seek innovation and learning? In Cycle 2, the group actively took a risk by supporting the MIT initiative. This was an innovative project for the group, and one that they eagerly supported. In May 2002 the board undertook its most significant risk, by endorsing a meeting for the organization to consider making a profound change. This was not the first time in its 27-year history that the group had discussed, reviewed, and considered disassociating from national (Radwick, 1991c). But it was the first time the board took the risk and proposed it to the membership in the form of a platform of alternatives.

Goal setting followed the historical pattern of the association and the model established by the state and national organizations. Even after the enthusiastic October 2001 gathering meetings, the group reverted back into old patterns. The lack of new systems to help maintain the new paradigm reinforced the past way of thinking, making new change efforts even more difficult. The break in the pattern finally came when the board asked the membership to decide the organization’s future at the May meeting.

Organizational culture invisibly permeates all decision making, and the Frankenmuth branch began this research in June 2001 with an optimistic attitude. This continued throughout the study, and grew locally as the group integrated personal needs in a more collaborative, cooperative environment. My December journal indicates some
negative attitudes toward some of the change initiatives, but that did not squelch the positive momentum that led to the organizational-change meeting in May.

**Summary**

During the first research cycle the decision making by the organization leaders showed a predominance of an organization-paradigm. In 10 of the 12 evidence indicators (75%) the group responded by honoring the organization instead of the members (see Table 3). During Cycle 2, the shift to more of a member-centered focus began to take place (see Table 4). Sixteen instances are offered as evidence of the decision-making mind-set relating to the Frankenmuth AAUW. Sixteen instances are offered as evidence of the decision-making mind-set relating to the Frankenmuth AAUW, with only 62%, as opposed to 75% from Cycle 1, supporting an organization-centered paradigm. Another comparison of evidence that the shift was beginning to take place is that during Cycle 1 only 25% of the decisions were from a member-centered paradigm, whereas in Cycle 2, 6 of the 16 decisions (38%) show thinking from this new perspective. The profound shift from an organizational-centered paradigm to a member-centered paradigm approach is illustrated in Table 5. Twelve out of the 15 evidence incidents (80%) reflected a new approach to thinking from a member-centered paradigm.

This study reflects a point in time when the decisions that were measured moved the group from an organization-centered to a member-centered paradigm. This is an emerging process, in which people in organizations may find themselves making decisions from either side of the paradigm. It is important, in this climate of change, that evolutionary learning and profound change be facilitated as a means to develop a creating culture in a learning society. The hope is that it can evolve into a new societal purpose, a
new societal way of life, and empower people to guide societal evolution by purposeful
design (Banathy, 2000).

In chapter 5, I state my conclusions and recommendations for AAUW and similar
organizations. These observations are based on the results of this study, the decision-
making paradigm shift, and the more far-reaching cultural information presented in
chapter 2.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

"In joining with others in the creation of culture as [a] set of shared norms, beliefs, ideas, and social practices, we attempt to locate ourselves in something larger and more enduring than ourselves" (Morgan, 1997, p. 228). By engaging in meaningful exchanges with others, we also help to find meaning in our own lives. We become identified with organizations, our roles becoming our realities. The survival of the organization becomes a quest for immortality, because the organization can outlive the generations (Morgan, 1997). Whenever collective efforts are attempted on a large scale, the fundamental problem arises as to how to coordinate the behavior of many participants without shifting the primary focus of their activities toward the maintenance of the structure (Karr, 2001; Weber, 1922/1969).

In this study group members became willing to move past the maintenance of the structure to considering a profound change once they gained the necessary evidence. If membership numbers and financial reports were the sole measures of success, the organization would have continued its steady course and not declared a crisis. This study was focused on the decision-making paradigm shift from an organization-centered viewpoint to a member-centered approach that took place among the Frankenmuth
AAUW members. The process of coming together to deal with the organization's future resulted in a reaffirmation of the Frankenmuth AAUW's purpose, personal reflections on and commitments to that purpose, and identification of possible organizational limits to growth.

On May 28, after 2 hours of discussion and dialogue, the 16 members present supported the motion to keep AAUW affiliation (Bassett, 2002a). At first blush, the decision to stay with the AAUW may appear to be a shift back to the organization-centered perspective. Only a future study can determine the outcome of this decision as it relates to decision-making paradigms. Will Frankenmuth AAUW members abandon their new perspective or integrate the new knowledge? Shermer (1997) said that when paradigm shifts take place, scientists do not abandon the entire science; rather, new features are added and new interpretations are given.

Some conclusions that can be drawn from this study are explored in the following pages. From the conclusions, I make recommendations for organizations similar to the Frankenmuth AAUW, identify possible future studies, and close with a summation.

Conclusions

Both class and gender transformations have affected U.S. associations, by joining together either men or women, not both, into multipurpose voluntary associations. From the 1800s through the 1960s, most large voluntary federations were cross-class, single-gender affairs. For much of American history, segregated female and male roles provided broad, shared identities through which huge numbers of people could band together across regional and class lines (Skocpol, 1998).
Until recently, male military veterans and higher-educated women have been leaders of nationally prestigious voluntary groups. Between 1974 and 1994 better educated women led the way in withdrawing from many types of voluntary federations, while simultaneously increasing their participation in occupation-based groups, such as unions and professional associations. ... Better educated Americans, in short, have pulled out of broad community groups in record numbers since the 1970's. (Skocpol. 1998. p. 42)

To sustain profound change in Frankenmuth, it is important to recognize that Frankenmuth can be defined according to the theory of community as a “cultural” or “closed” community. A closed community is a value-creating entity where the local social life is bounded and sufficiently intense, such that strong norms and traditions are generated (Milofsky. 1988b). In addition, the shared history or culture among members is so highly structured that individual actions tend to have ramifications throughout the system to the extent that there exist many cross-cutting affiliations, many redundant ties, and a variety of social hierarchies within the population (Milofsky. 1988b). In Frankenmuth, the strong norms relate to Judeo-Christian values. The Frankenmuth School District provides direct evidence of a resistance to change, stating in its values that it is “a traditional school system, which does not need to return to the basics, because we never left them” (“Mission Statement,” 2002). Furthermore, the district reinforces the Christian perspective by specifically identifying churches as valued community members (“Mission Statement,” 2002).

People’s deepest images of men and women come from religion. Religion is where people get their images of what it is like to be human, said feminist theologian Mary Hunt and Elizabeth Schüssler Fioren (1996), directors of the Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual. The importance of the annihilation of powerful female figures by religious groups cannot be overestimated. Such groups have devalued the
complementary qualities that women bring to a community's health and survival by deleting women from important roles in the whole social structure (Mann, 1996). The religious devaluation of women may, in part, explain the Frankenmuth AAUW members' rejection of the idea that they are contributing members of the larger feminism movement. The words feminist or women's movement did not appear in any of the Frankenmuth AAUW branch archive literature, or newsletters, or local newspaper articles.

Feminist or not, there is a belief that women's groups that self-destruct today do so because they are structured for consensus. Women tend to assume that a group must do some self-sacrificing chore, rather than create resources for its own members and open up opportunities for others in a way that feels good (Wolf, 1994). When a group of women leave behind destructive ways of relating and instead band together as a force for change, they can become a powerful source of social transformation (Heim et al., 2001).

Through sporting events and activities, boys have had a longer tradition of working together as a team, sharing a goal, and committing themselves to the group effort. "Since girls organize around relationships rather than activities, the personalities of other women involved loom larger in their eyes than does the political goal in question" (Wolf, 1994, p. 294). Thus, for women's organizations to be successful, they need to substitute respect for intimacy and teamwork for sisterhood (Wolf, 1994).

The AAUW's mission of promoting education for all women and girls, with emphasis on lifelong education, is especially significant to a woman's self-image. A college education is crucial to the female architecture of self. Women with bachelor's degrees report a greater sense of agency and enhanced feelings of potential than do less
educated women (Marcus, 1995; Orenstein, 2000). Therefore, better educated women are likely to have more success fighting oppression and creating a healthier society. The dominant culture helps maintain itself by punishing those opposed to it because acting against current social mores, especially those against the entrenched powers of society, can be costly. Hence, profound and far-reaching social changes need to be implemented in order to break the cycle.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are far reaching. They are intended to expand and build on a member-centered paradigm by looking at opportunities that organizations like the AAUW could explore if they want to take advantage of societal changes.

Throughout corporate America and in social networks, no recognized powerful old-girls network is in place to mentor and provide role models to women. Many writers have theorized about why this is so, but they all agreed that being excluded from a network puts women at a disadvantage. America’s culture is so rife with hidden messages to keep women from equal power that one often does not recognize the disparity or the injustice. For example, “equal” opportunity targets typically represent less than a 50% match of male to female. Also, “women and minority” categories suggest that women are a special interest group, as if all women of all races were a minority at a time when census figures project that White men will become an increasingly small minority (Wolf, 1994).

Wolf (1994), in *Fire With Fire*, called on women to “close the gap between the majority of American women and the women’s movement” (p. xvi). Because many women feel estranged from the women’s movement, Wolf tried to give voice to what she
called "unlabeled feminism," the majority of women who long for equality but shun the movement. She directed women to reclaim the movement by returning to a fair, humanistic and egalitarian movement, away from female or male superiority.

In 1987, the AAUW national board took a step towards becoming an egalitarian movement when it voted unanimously to open AAUW membership to all graduates who hold a baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university ("Delegates Make," 1987). Fifteen years later, all 60 of the people listed on the three AAUW corporate boards and staff were females ("AAUW Board," 2002). AAUW's political platform on diversity includes race, social status, and sexual orientation, but says nothing about gender.

Educational systems are undergoing significant change for the first time since the present era of American education began, which historians date as commencing with the 1918 *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* (Hirsch, 1996). As an advocate for educational equity and a self-acclaimed leader in this area, the AAUW should be at the forefront of this educational movement. It could further the mission if members read about AAUW representatives actively involved on the foundation boards and committees who are researching educational-system changes and helping implement new learning strategies.

Another opportunity in the educational sector is for AAUW leaders to work with the growing number of women who are leading colleges and universities. According to the NCWO,

the number of colleges and universities headed by women increased from 5% in 1975 to 10% in 1990. Women of color made up less than 2% of these high-level administrators. In 1910, 20% of college faculty were female. In 1997, women comprised only 28% of college faculty. This is only an eight-percentage point
increase in an 87-year period. In 1995, women made up only 31% of the full-time faculty of American colleges and universities, up from 26% in 1920, a five percentage point increase in 75 years. Women make up almost 40% of the full-time faculty at public colleges, but only 20% of positions at top-ranked public and private research institutions. In comparison, only six years after Title IX passed, women's participation in inter-collegiate sports increased by almost 600 percent. ("Facts, Higher Education," 2002)

In her "Call to Action," included in chapter 4, AAUW executive director Woods mentioned the importance of partnerships. Presented in this study were two attempts by leaders of the national association to connect with other groups, one with the NEA and the other with the NOW. Unfortunately, the Frankenmuth branch was unable to implement either the Bullying program with NEA or Title IX with NOW. It appears that the national association did not think the initiative all the way through to the local branch level. When partnerships and collaborating efforts are done poorly, as these two were, they are likely to do more damage than good. There are several possible ways to rectify this situation. One is to strengthen the communication and connection in the state/division/branch system. The AAUW members have not yet established a sisterhood with other AAUW members. There is a lack of communication, networking, and coordinating efforts by branch members who live in close proximity to each other. Further, the role and purpose of each layer of the AAUW hierarchy need a closer look. For example, the 2001 District 3 Fall Event was attended by only 5% of the possible district members, 30 women from a potential pool of 572 members.

Going beyond a close look at its organizational structure, the AAUW could also re-evaluate its membership criteria. According to current AAUW membership criteria a member's being accepted is based on whether the IFUW recognizes the college that individual attended. This determination ignores the fact that, in the past 13 years, more
than 100 4-year colleges in the United States have closed, and the number of corporate universities ballooned from 400 to more than 2,000. If the current pace of growth continues, the number of corporate universities will exceed the number of traditional institutions (Meister, 2001).

Future Studies

A follow-up study researching the outcome of the Frankenmuth AAUW’s decision to maintain its national AAUW affiliation would add to the body of knowledge regarding organizational change efforts, the evolution of women’s organizations, and the sustainability of a decision-making paradigm shift. Other themes emerged from this study, which also suggest opportunities for more research. These include theories relating to gender-specific teams and team-building processes, gender-specific mentoring, leadership and personality styles as they relate to paradigm shifts, and profiling volunteer members’ characteristics. There would also be value in identifying and connecting quantitative measures of successful community organizations to the themes found in this study. In addition, I could not find any comparative analysis on women’s organizations, their structures, benefits, missions, membership, and so on. Comparing gender-specific volunteer organizations, “male organizations” and “female organizations,” may also help in understanding workplace and community dynamics.

Last, future researchers may want to consider the many studies of the corporate, for-profit world that would be interesting to replicate in a nonprofit, voluntary environment. If we believe in the value of a civil society, then volunteer and community organizations should not disappear without some understanding of the elements leading to their dissolution. Through greater understanding and additional knowledge, the
barriers that stand in the way of achieving a more civil society might be broken down more easily.

Concluding Remarks

The number of women between 35 and 44 is projected to be 17.1 million in 2005, compared with 11.7 million in 1985. The percentage of the labor force between the ages of 35 and 54 increased from 36% in 1975 to 42% in 1990, and is expected to increase to 48% by 2005. In 1995, the work force included more than 22.3 million working mothers with children under 18 years old, compared with 19.8 million in 1987. When we consider these demographic trends together, they indicate two major changes in the composition of the workforce. First, the number of working parents, and particularly working mothers, is rising. Second, the workforce is aging as baby-boomers continue into later career stages (Gordon & Whelan, 1998). Those companies and organizations that recognize these demographic trends and provide value to this increasing population of working parents and aging women have the potential for greater success.

In *The American Woman*, Costello and Stone, 2001 looked at women's leadership in politics, higher education, business, trade unions, and the military. For the most part, the authors were optimistic about the future, suggesting that the new millennium will bring many more women to top posts in these areas. Of course, women's continued progress to the top will not happen automatically. Women must be willing to go beyond their "comfort zone" to take risks and act boldly (Costello & Stone, 2001). According to Wolf (1994),

Political equality—indeed, political primacy—is within women's grasp, if they choose to seize it. Women are far more powerful than they know, have far more leverage than they are using, and can raise their voices to make rapid, sweeping, irrefutable
changes in the conditions of their lives. To do so, however, they must stop thinking of themselves as passive victims of history and understand that they can determine not only their own fate, but that of the rest of the world. (p. xv)

"We will never effectively change the way we raise girls unless we also change the way we raise boys, and we will never alter the outcome for most girls until we change the way most boys think of girls" (Mann, 1996, p. 15). Most men remain untouched by the women's movement. Men have traditionally occupied center stage, with women's attention on them. The shifting center of attention from men to women bothers men far more than women's demands for equal pay or equal opportunity. The underlying shift is toward the decreasing marginal utility of males and may be the main source of men's resistance to women's liberation or any form of feminism (Goode, 1993).

"Women can't lead fuller lives until men are equal partners in the home, but men can't be true partners at home until there's further change in the workplace" (Orenstein, 2000, p. 289). For example, the power in American society is illustrated by a study by educators Sadker and Sadker (Tanenbaum, 1999). They asked hundreds of students across the country. "Suppose you woke up tomorrow and you were a member of the other sex. How would your life be different?" Forty-two percent of the girls could think of reasons why it would be advantageous to be male, but only 5% of the 565 boys questioned could find any advantage whatsoever to being female. This suggests the need for a glacial cultural shift, one that celebrates the family above materialism, above wealth, and in some ways above the individual.

The paradox of cultural transformation consists of great rapidity and nonlinearity, on the one hand, and equally great potential breakthroughs on the other. The accompanying messiness of developing transformational skills is a complex, unclear
process that often is influenced by contradictory advice, leading to failure (Fullan, 2001). It requires letting go of many assumptions, assumptions that contributed and possibly led to past organizational success. Much of organizational-development theory has focused on doing things differently, not necessarily on being different (Filippino, 2001).

As often happens, today’s problems are being solved in the context of yesterday’s understanding. Much of people’s behavior is situation-dependent: it is impossible to separate the individual from the environment in which he or she functions (Barker, 1968; Barker & Schoggen, 1973; Hall, 1966, 1989; Kilpatrick, 1961). Bela H. Banathy (2000) who coined the terms of evolutionary learning and evolutionary consciousness defines evolutionary learning as an open-ended process of experimentation. The journey of evolutionary learning begins with a vision of an ideal future. It is a collaborative inquiry, undertaken by those inspired to begin the quest. Groups of people, whether in communities, organizations, or families, can guide their evolution by purposeful design. The evolutionary scenario incorporates a systems worldview with ethics and values that are altruistically directed toward creating a loving universe. Putnam (2000a) presents the challenge. He states,

We tell pollsters that we wish we lived in a more civil, more trustworthy, more collectively caring community. The evidence from our inquiry shows that this longing is not simply nostalgia or “false consciousness.” Americans are right that the bonds of our communities have withered, and we are right to fear that this transformation has very real costs. The challenge for us, however, as it was for our predecessors moving from the Gilded Age into the Progressive Era, is not to grieve over social change, but to guide it. (p. 402)

My goal in this research was to design, implement, and assess the initial change efforts of the Frankenmuth branch of the AAUW enabling them to grow stronger and more successful. Although the current organizational structure accomplishes the mission.
it also is restrictive, limiting the branch’s power and effectiveness. This group has the potential to take a leadership role as the primary advocate for women and girls in the Frankenmuth community and the entire mid-Michigan area. They would do well to remember that “the greatest constant of modern times is change” (Sternman, 2000. p. 3) and that their goal should be not to manage change, but rather to only be ahead of it (Drucker & Senge, 2000).

In conclusion, I found through this study that the decision-making paradigm, whether organization focused or member focused, affects the ability of voluntary community organizations to make profound changes. A nostalgic desire to maintain hierarchical, often ineffective organizations redirects energy, time, and resources that could be used to further the organizational mission and add value to members’ lives. Groups willing to take risks and shift paradigms from the sanctity of the organization to the primacy of the vision increase their potential for success by becoming more aligned with members’ values. These groups can begin by challenging old paradigms and continuously learning to develop systems that extend beyond simply “doing” to “being.” The ability to integrate newfound awareness may be the essence of what it will take for community organizations to grow, change, and evolve.

"How strange is the lot of us mortals! Each of us is here for a brief sojourn; for what purpose he knows not, though he senses it. But without deeper reflection one knows from daily life that one exists for other people." (Einstein, 1954. p. 8)
APPENDIX

RELEASE FORM
October 3, 2001

As you may know from previous correspondence, I am incorporating our organization as part of my Andrews University dissertation research as I work toward earning my Ph.D. in Leadership. The following information provides an overview of the research, its benefits and your involvement. There is also a place at the bottom for your signature to secure your consent to be part of this study. The release form is approved by Andrew’s University to protect your rights regarding this study.

I plan to use Action Science Research, a methodology where the participants are an active and integral part of the study design, implementation and assessment. As the name suggests, action research is has the dual aims of action and research. “Action” to bring about change in the Frankenmuth Branch of the American Association of University Women and “research” to increase understanding on the part of the researcher, the members of the AAUW, the Frankenmuth community and those interested in evolutionary learning. Action research uses an emerging design process, meaning many of the research methodologies will evolve over time with the study. The study will take place in Frankenmuth and the mid-Michigan area over approximately my first term as President (from June 2001 to June 2002).

The initial benefit of the study to the organization and its members is the commitment of resources (such as time and expertise) by the investigator and her dissertation team of faculty and regional co-horts. Also, it is expected that this research process will bring growth and increased understanding of the organization by members and its stakeholders. Lastly, these organizational changes will have impact beyond the Frankenmuth AAUW reaching the local community, mid-michigan area and the state and national AAUW organizations through our evolutionary organizational decisions and the sharing of these ideas and processes.

GENERAL CONSENT FORM

Investigator’s name: Tracy Weber, 12847 Rathbun, Birch Run, MI 48415
(989) 652-8552, tweber@journey.com

Advisor and Department: Dr. James Tucker, Leadership Program, Andrews University, Bell Hall 173-D, Berrien Springs, MI 49104 (616) 471-3475, tuckerj@andrews.edu

Project Title: The Design, Implementation and Assessment of Initial Change and Growth in a Local Voluntary Organization and its’ Members Through the Process of Action Science Research.

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We are beginning to engage in a study of change and growth in AAUW and its members. To help us gain further insights you may be observed, audiotaped and possibly videotaped during AAUW meetings and may be asked to participate in individual and group interviews. When audiotaping or videotaping are considered, you will be asked for your permission in advance of the recording. Most records of information will take the form of meeting minutes, newsletters and other written correspondence as well as journalling by the investigator. All information is public and available to you at any time. The final report will be printed and submitted as part of my doctoral requirements. The meeting minutes will be kept as part of normal AAUW records and maintained in our archives.

The data you will provide will be recorded anonymously and your participation and anything you say during the interviews, meetings or conversations will be held in the strictest confidence. There will be no form of payment, reimbursement of costs or other type of inducement for participating in the research other than the normal AAUW meeting amenities.

We welcome questions about the research at any time and receive satisfactory answers before consenting to participating in the study. Your participation in this study is on a voluntary basis and you may refuse to participate at any time without consequence, prejudice or denial of benefits to which you are entitled. Due to the nature of this research, there is no anticipated risk, stress, discomfort or invasion of privacy anticipated as a result of your participation in the study.

Signing your name below indicates that you have read and understand the contents of this consent form and that you agree to take part in this study. Signing this form will not waive any of your legal rights. You will also receive a copy of this signed consent form for your own personal records.

Signature: _______________________________  Date: ______________

Participant Name: __________________________

Address: _________________________________  Phone: _____________

Investigator Signature: _____________________  Date: ______________

Witness Signature: _________________________  Date: ______________

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Tracy A. Weber
12847 Rathbun
Birch Run, MI 48415
(989) 652-8552
tweber@journey.com

**Vision:** To help people by creating learning experiences with horses which are recognized by educators, business leaders, and members of the equestrian learning community as valuable while pursuing my journey of continuous learning, self-discovery, and personal mastery.

**Education:**
Andrews University
*Ph.D.* in Leadership, expected graduation December 2002; Grade Point Average: 4.0/4.0

Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY
*Master of Science* in Service Management, 1999; Grade Point Average: 4.0/4.0

Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI
*Bachelor of Arts Degree* in Advertising, 1984; Grade Point Average: 3.3/4.0
Women’s Studies Thematic Program

**Experience:**
Creator, Kaleidoscope Learning Circle, myklc.com
*September 2002 - present*

*Project Director,* American Assoc. of Univ. Women Community Action Grant, Frankenmuth, MI
*February 2000 - August 2001*

*Researcher and Writer,* Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY
*November 2000 - February 2001*

*Project Director,* MI Humanities Council/Frankenmuth Hist. Partnership Grant, Frankenmuth, MI
*June 1997 - December 1998*

*Curator of Education and Interim Director,* Frankenmuth Historical Assoc., Frankenmuth, MI
*February 1996 - January 1998*

*Marketing Director,* TEAM ONE Credit Union, Saginaw, MI
*July 1991 - February 1996*

**Recent Training:**
2002 Franklin Covey Principle-Centered Community Initiative
2002 Leadership Institute for Higher Education, Greenleaf Center
2002 EAGALA Level 1, St. Catharine’s, Ontario
2001 EAGALA Certified, Level 1, Franklin Furnace, Ohio
1999 Team Building Training, Camp Henry, Grand Haven Michigan

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