



## SUMMER 2024 THE PINE

### **A FINAL MESSAGE from Jan Carey, President**



This is my final message as AAUW MN president. My term of office ends June 30, 2024. It has been my pleasure to have served as your AAUW MN state president. I look forward to new responsibilities with AAUW MN as we all continue to move forward and collectively advocate for women and girls.

I have also posted my final update to AAUW MN branch presidents and leaders. The update includes the most recent information from National. I strongly encourage and request you share the

information in the update with branch members. I color-coded the information to correspond with a branch designee/committee chair. I hope that will be a helpful way to share the information.

I also included a review of the AAUW MN Strategic Plan and the areas we completed actions and implementations. We've done well in many areas. But there is still work to be done.

There are other issues beyond the Strategic Plan that all branches are facing. They are in the areas of:

- a) membership,
- b) leadership recruitment,
- c) partnerships/collaborations,
- d) communications; and

e) promotion of public policy priorities at the branch level.

Members of the AAUW National Advancement Committee have asked national staff for a response & reaction to the Open UP AAUW membership vote result. Affiliates need assistance as we maneuver the after effects. Those after effects have begun.

Members, who are leaving AAUW as a result of the failure of the vote, is very unexpected. Thus, state leaders are seeking, from national, an action response and a strong, inciteful membership campaign.

Partnerships & collaborations are the responsibility of affiliates. Please find like-minded organizations to cooperate with and demonstrate the value of AAUW.

Communications issues are prevalent everywhere. AAUW MN provides every tool to communicate through the website, FB page, THE PINE, email postings, postcards, newspapers and phone calls. But we can't make members read, open email or the website or follow on FB. Please try to be cognizant to all the tools being used to keep members informed.

Promotion of public policy priorities at the branch level is going to be critical as we move closer to November 5, 2024. I can only say 'women must prevail'. Convince every person, every gender, every ethnicity of the importance of their vote in national and state elections. Our lives literally depend on it.

Thank you, each and every one of you, for all you do to support AAUW and promote the mission of AAUW to the best of your ability.

Stay well, stay safe!

*Moving Forward ~ Collectively Advocating*

## **NCCWSL 2024**



Eleven students from Minnesota attended the 2024 AAUW National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) at The University of Maryland. AAUW Minnesota provided nine \$1000 grants to the following branches to assist with their sponsorship of a college student: Brainerd Area, Ely, Duluth, Hastings, Minneapolis, Owatonna, Red Wing Area, Rochester, and Willmar. Students were given the option of attending 40 workshops and Panel Discussions including sessions *Authentic Leadership: Meaning, Impact, and Challenges for Emerging Leaders,*

*How to Amp Up Your Political and Civic Engagement, Leading from the Heart: The Basics of Nonviolent Communication, Exploring Quantum Computing and Machine Learning: Building Blocks for Future Innovators, and This Woman's Worth: Communicating Your Personal Brand.*

The success of the Conference can best be communicated in the words of a few of the Minnesota students attending NCCWSL:

**Haley Patel, UMD Student sponsored by the Duluth Branch, wrote** *During the AAUW NCCWSL*

*2024 I was able to retain so much knowledge from the informational workshops that were offered. One of the workshops that stuck out to me the most was "Eliminating the Leadership Gap". This workshop was a leadership panel of women discussing the challenges they have faced in their respective fields and ways to overcome them. Some advice that they gave that really resonated with me are the following. One piece of advice was to "Always take a seat at the table", they discussed the barriers you may face with finding support in the workplace and ways to find allies to help you get a seat at the table to in a way, asset yourself. Another piece of advice that really spoke to me was to "Inhale confidence, exhale doubt". During this part of the panel, the panelists explained the importance of confidence and why you should show up in spaces like you belong in them. They explained that if you were invited into a space, you belong there, so own it. There were many other workshops that I had attended, two more of those "Financial Literacy, Smart Budget, Finances and Future" and "Designing Your Post Grad Career" helped me gain tools to grow personally and professionally.*

*I made the most of this conference and I was also able to network and develop new friendships with the women student leaders at this conference. Overall, AAUW NCCWSL 2024 gave me the opportunity to understand more about ways to develop my leadership, professionalism, and activism skills which is going to be able to help me better serve as an outlet for the multicultural and marginalized communities at UMD."*

*Thank you,  
Haley Patel*

**Yasmine Badio, sponsored by the Brainerd Area Branch, wrote** *"This has been one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I have never been surrounded by so many influential women who are leaders in the present and for the future to come. There is so much I have learned from others and their community. I am so excited to bring back ideas and lessons that I can share with my campus and future occupation. I've learned how to walk into a room confidently and know my purpose for what I want. I want to take risks, become a leader, and be the best versions of myself. I want to thank you to the wonderful women who spoke at the conference, to Erich Hepner, Patricia Scott, and Coralee Fox [Brainerd Area members] for helping me through this journey, and lastly, I want to thank AAUW for seeing something in me that I never saw in myself. I will use the tools that I have been taught in the years to come. Thank you."*

**Judith Roberts, Ridgewater College Student sponsored by Willmar Branch wrote** *"I am writing to extend my deepest gratitude for the generous financial support you provided, which allowed*

*me to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) in Baltimore, Maryland. This incredible experience has had a profound impact on my personal and professional growth, and I am immensely thankful for the opportunity you have given me.*

*The conference offered many workshops, panels, and presentations instrumental in developing my business skills. Engaging with knowledgeable professionals and participating in interactive sessions has equipped me with valuable tools and strategies that I am confident will benefit my career trajectory. The practical knowledge I gained is something I will carry with me and apply as I advance in my professional journey.*

*One of the most empowering aspects of NCCWSL was the chance to be surrounded by accomplished women who are leading in their respective fields. Listening to their stories, learning from their experiences, and witnessing their success was both inspiring and motivating. The environment was charged with positivity and ambition, and it was a privilege to be part of such a dynamic and supportive community. This experience has strengthened my resolve to pursue my goals with determination and to contribute meaningfully to my field.*

*I am profoundly grateful to the Minnesota AAUW for your commitment to supporting young women in their educational and professional pursuits. Your generosity has made a significant difference in my life, and I am honored to have been selected for this opportunity. Without your funding, attending NCCWSL would not have been possible for me, and I am deeply appreciative of your investment in my future.*

*Thank you once again for this extraordinary opportunity. I am eager to apply the knowledge and skills I have acquired and to make a positive impact in my community, inspired by the incredible women I met at NCCWSL.*

*With sincere appreciation,  
Judith Roberts"*

**Congratulations to all the 2024 AAUW MN and Branch NCCWSL Grant Recipients!**

## Minnesota AAUW Funds

The Minnesota annual convention held in Hastings on April 26-27, 2024, included a silent auction for AAUW Funds.

There were 36 items that were donated for the silent auction. Payments were made via checks, cash, and credit cards. The final collection was \$2913 after the credit card transaction fee deduction. The amount collected was paid towards the AAUW Greatest Needs Fund (9110).

The following branches donated items towards the silent auction:

<b>Branch</b>	<b>Winning Bid</b>
St. Paul (2 items)	\$530
Hastings (4 items)	\$415
Brainerd Lakes (3 items)	\$275
Winona (4 items)	\$215
Smead Corp, Hastings	\$200
Minneapolis (4 items)	\$185
Rochester (2 Items)	\$185
Red Wing (2 items)	\$170
Ely (1 item)	\$160
Grand Rapids (2 items)	\$110
Faribault (1 item)	\$70
Hibbing (1 item)	\$70
Austin (1 item)	\$65
Owatonna (1 item)	\$65
Fergus Falls (1 item)	\$55
Albert Lea (2 items)	\$55
St. Croix Valley (1 item)	\$50
Willmar (1 item)	\$45
Northfield (1 item)	\$30

The Minnesota AAUW funds contribution amount for 2023, based on the December 2023 report received from National AAUW, was \$89,630.49

The majority of the donations were made towards supporting the 9110-AAUW Greatest Needs Fund. The other funds supported by MN AAUW are: 4450-Education & Training Fund, 4449-Economic Security Fund, 2504-National Conference for College Women Student Leaders Scholarships, and 4452-Leadership Fund.

The highest branch contribution amount was from the Rochester branch. Rochester AAUW also had the highest individual contribution and the highest number of individual contributions. The per capita amount from each branch is listed below. Every branch contribution represents the generosity and support of programs vital to the organization.

<b>AAUW MN Branch</b>	<b>Per Capita Collection</b>
Albert Lea	\$10
Alexandria	\$3.60
Austin	\$3
Brainerd	\$28.30
Duluth	\$42.65
Ely	\$34.10
Faribault	\$59.13
Fergus Falls	\$16.41
Grand Rapids	\$32.65
Hastings	\$22.42
Hibbing	\$54.38
Metro West	\$523.75
Minneapolis	\$20.65
Moorhead	\$85
Northfield	\$30
Owatonna	\$104.40
Red Wing	\$58.80
Rochester	\$269
Saint Cloud	\$11
Saint Croix	\$0.5
Saint Paul	\$27.62
Thief River Falls	\$17.5
Virginia	--
Willmar	\$11
Winona	\$4
MN	\$2000
Northeast Metro (Disbanded)	\$516.13

Through their AAUW Funds contributions, many branches across Minnesota qualified to honor special people as Named Grant Honorees. A branch was able to recognize one special person for every \$750 that it contributed to one of the previously mentioned AAUW funds.

Below is the list of 2023 Named Grant Honorees received from the various branches as of March 18, 2024. We acknowledge and thank these women, who were recognized for their contributions to AAUW, their branches, and their communities. AAUW MN branches should be proud of their work and financial awards they've each given in the names of these deserving individuals.

**Brainerd** Mary Farmer

**Duluth** Angela George, Linda LeGarde-Grover

<b>Ely</b>	Barb Soderberg, Pat Merfeld, Marge Forsberg
<b>Faribault</b>	“In honor of all the women who have worked at our Faribault AAUW Book Sales from the 1960’s to our last one in 2024”
<b>Hastings</b>	Shirley Tammen, Ramona McCullough, Diane Saed
<b>Hibbing</b>	Sara Merfeld
<b>Minneapolis</b>	Ann Vanvick, Jennifer Johnson, Leslie Swenson, Julie Ollila, Marilyn Listvan, Ginny Craig
<b>Owatonna</b>	Marla Holt
<b>Red Wing</b>	AnnMarie Rose
<b>Rochester</b>	Marilyn Stewart, Wendy Shannon, Stacy Haugen, Amy Caucutt
<b>St. Paul</b>	Alice Faribault, Carol Gregorson, Karen Kirkwood, Avis Tilden, Carol Oeltjenbruns, Carolyn Sorenson, Sharon Klumpp, Kay Hoskins, Jan Quist, Jan Hertel

## **National Open Membership Election Results.**

A bylaws change requires an affirmative vote by 2/3 (66.6%) of the AAUW members. The affirmative vote for opening membership to those who do not have a college degree was 65.1% of members. In Minnesota 72% of members voted for open membership. However, of the 1,534 MN members eligible to vote, only 651 voted. Of those 174 voted no and 441 vote yes.

## **2024 State Annual Meeting**

### **The Business Meeting**

One hundred twenty-one members and guests attended. There were eighty eligible voters consisting of seventy Branch delegates, four Past State Presidents and six State Board Members.

The budget proposed by the Finance Committee and was adopted unanimously.

The following officers were elected:

Kelsey Waits, President;

Barb Wonson Liukkonen, Vice President AAUW Funds;

Sandra Martell, Secretary/Historian and

Mary Chorewycz, Nominations Committee.

Offices remaining unfilled are Vice President for Membership and two additional members of the Nominations Committee.

Vice President for Public Policy Kelsey Waits presented the Public Policy and Biennial Action Priorities for 2024-2026, which were adopted unanimously.

**The Resolution** "Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW Minnesota vigorously supports passing the ERA to the Minnesota Constitution." Proposed by AAUW Duluth Branch was unanimously adopted. No resolutions were offered from the floor.

The State Meeting Booklet includes details. On its cover is a beautiful illustration of Hastings by award winning local artist, Andy Evansen.

### **The Program**

The Program based on the theme **Confluence = Inclusion, Collaboration, and**



**Empowerment** began Friday evening with **Britta Johnson**, Hastings Branch Scholarship Recipient and NCCWSL student, who now works as a legal assistant at Davis and Goldfarb, an immigration law firm in Minneapolis. She spoke about how AAUW's support helped guide her to her current career.

She was followed by **Suzan Willhite**, ERAMN President Emeritus and Member of Woman Corp., who spoke regarding the status of the Equal Rights Amendment in Minnesota.



The Friday Evening Keynote Speaker, **Megan Peterson**, Executive Director, Gender Justice, spoke about Gender Justice's success repealing Minnesota abortion restrictions, protecting the rights of transgender kids to learn in safe environments and get the health care they need and ending state funding of anti-abortion crisis pregnancy centers. She emphasized the need for a state constitutional amendment to protect these achievements. Laws can be overturned in the next session of the legislature or interpreted too narrowly by courts. Only constitutionally protected equal rights as set forth in the proposed Minnesota ERA Constitutional Amendment can secure these vital fights.

On Saturday **Lisa Hedin**, Hasting Branch President and Hastings **Mayor Mary Fasbender** welcomed AAUW MN to Hastings and Senator Amy Klobuchar joined us by video.





The Keynote address followed the business meeting. Dr. Karen Kedrowski, Professor of



Political Science at Iowa State University and Director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, gave a presentation on Gender Wage Gap. Her rationale for the gender wage gap is based on the following factors:  
1- occupational segregation (women's jobs vs men's jobs),  
2- deviations women have from the typical male work pattern (women more likely to work part-time, change jobs, work for the government)  
3- more deviations (men negotiate aggressively, self-promote, are in a union job)  
4- plain old discrimination (get paid less for the same job, e.g. Lily Ledbetter, women's national soccer team). The Wage gap has a lifetime earnings loss and lifetime retirement loss for women. This is not just a women's issue it affects family income and family legacy earnings. There are public policy and private actions by employers and employees that can be taken to reduce the wage gap. This does not have to continue. We in the USA are behind most other industrialized countries in terms of support for women rights.



Michelle Witte, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota, spoke of the importance of encouraging voter registration on college campuses and in high schools through non-partisan efforts. Students are more apt to vote if they are already registered.

Lt Governor Peggy Flanagan told us about three generations of women in her family who have worked for equity and how important that legacy is to her and for her daughter.

Hastings Women Entrepreneurs. The final program at the Annual meeting was a panel of Hastings women entrepreneurs.



Moderator, Jan Hertel posed questions to owners Jen Fox, Spiral Microbrewery; Nicole Sindelar, Hastings Golf Club; Barb Hollenbeck,



Kelsie Waits (left), the new AAUW MN President, is sitting with Minnesota Lt. Governor, Peggy Flanagan.

Second Childhood Toy Store; Sara Lawrence, Muse 2320 Fiber Company; and Dr. Rachel Allgor, Journey Audiology and Hearing Care. The panelists answered questions such as: What is your greatest challenge as a business owner? Is your status ever questioned? What are the pros and cons of being your own boss? What motivates you to keep going? Who has been your role model? How many hours per week do you typically work? How did you get through Covid? For the question "Describe personality traits that are necessary to be a successful entrepreneur?" Some answers were:

humility, gusto, sense of humor and patience, perseverance and perspective, growth mindset, and confidence in yourself, To the question “What do you wish someone had told you?”, a panelist responded: “I wish I had had leadership training”.

Members in the audience were encouraged to ask questions of the panelists also. This panel discussion was an interesting and fast paced successful ending to the 2024 AAUW of Minnesota Annual Meeting.

### **June 13, 2024 State Board Meeting (ZOOM)**

President Jan Carey reported on her activities with national committees. She emphasized the need for a State Diversity Officer and for a College/University Representative. She will be providing a comprehensive statement of achievements and aspirations to branch president.

Janice Quist, Finance Chair raised the ongoing need to pay operational expenses from savings and recommended that the Board consider proposing an increase in state dues. She suggested a \$3 increase, which would make the state dues \$12. This would not eliminate the need to withdraw from savings, but would significantly reduce it. Such a change would require approval at the 2025 State Meeting.

Teresa Sagen, Administrative Assistant is preparing the 2024-2025 AAUW MN State Directory. Branch presidents should provide information for the Directory as soon as possible. She also reported that the website has been edited in order to make room for new material.

Rajani Sohni, Vice President for AAUW Funds submitted the report reprinted above in this edition of The Pine.

Karen Kirkwood, Vice President Program plans to urge branches to start early to prepare applications for Strategic Plan Grants. She will encourage them to go beyond having speakers, to use panels discussions and they can also use National’s Plug and Play Programing.

Kelsey Waits, Vice President for Public Policy plans to work with other like minded organizations to pursue AAUW public policy goals, including getting ERA on the Minnesota ballot in 2026. She also hopes to establish a virtual branch.

Pat Powers, Vice President for Membership raised whether the Board should apply for a Melinda Gates Foundation grant. Perhaps for a project utilizing our advocacy partners or a MN CU 'conference' to further engage collegians with regard to the AAUW mission (e.g. voter issues with Michelle Witte Secretary of State Steve Simon; pay equity with Karen Kedrowski or Title IX. The 'conference' could include actual StartSmart/Work Smart training of the collegians on the spot as an activity. This idea will be pursued.

## **Annual State Meeting 2025**

AAUW Austin Branch has offered to hold the 2025 State Meeting. It will likely be held in late April.

## **ACTIVITIES, EVENTS ETC. OF BRANCHES AROUND THE STATE**

### **Brainerd**

*Summer 2024 Her Voice Magazine* of the Brainerd Dispatch includes an article about AAUW and the Branch's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**Saturday, September 7, 2024**

**Northland Arboretum**

10:00 a.m. registration, light refreshments 10:30 am

Speaker – Kelsey Waits,

AAUW MN President 2024 -2026

AAUW MN Public Policy Chair 2022 – 2024

PhD Student in Public Policy

at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs Question

and Answer session with presenter.

Dialogue on community concerns related to pay equity and to form a Community Action plan to affirm Pay Equity in the Brainerd Lakes Area.

### **Duluth**

The 2024 Summer Social for members and guests will be held in late summer or early fall. Socialize and learn about upcoming programs and focus groups for 2024-25.

### **Ely**

Northland Get Together – October 12<sup>th</sup> 9:30 -2:30 (activities Fri & Sat evenings)

Neighbor to Neighbor Bringing Advocacy Home

The Grand Ely Lodge

### **Grand Rapids**

Summer potluck will be held on Monday, August 19.

## What Branches are Reading

### Brainerd

The Extraordinary Story of the Founding Mothers of NPR by Lisa Napoli for July

### Faribault

The Lost Girls of Paris by Pam Jenoff for June.

Everything I've Never Told You by Celeste Ng for July

### Grand Rapids

Unthinkable: Trauma, Truth, and the Trials of American Democracy by Congressman Jamie Raskin for June

The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride for August

### Owatonna

The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post by Allison Pataki for June

Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano for July

Absolution by Alice McDermott for August

### St Cloud Area

Saturday Night at the Lakeside Supper Club by J. Ryan Stradel for June

The Rabbit Hutch by Tess Gunty for July

The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store by James McBride for August

### St Croix Valley

The Woman They Could Not Silence by Kate Moore for July

### St Paul

Mystery Book Club meets in June, July and August

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Board Members

President Jan Carey,

VP Membership, Pat Powers, [pat.pow01@gmail.com](mailto:pat.pow01@gmail.com)

VP Program, Karen Kirkwood, [KarenSKirwood@cs.com](mailto:KarenSKirwood@cs.com)

VP Public Policy, Kelsey Waits, [kelseywaits@gmail.com](mailto:kelseywaits@gmail.com)

VP AAUW Funds, Rajani Sohni, [rsohni@gmail.com](mailto:rsohni@gmail.com)

Treasurer-Beth Nienow, [bethnienow@charter.net](mailto:bethnienow@charter.net)

Secretary/Historian – Sandra Martell, [wave34145@gmail.com](mailto:wave34145@gmail.com)

College/University Representative, \_

Administrative Assistant, Teresa Sagen, [tkswagen@gmail.com](mailto:tkswagen@gmail.com)

Bylaws Chair, Sandra Martell, [wave34145@gmail.com](mailto:wave34145@gmail.com)

Pine Editor, Sandra Martell, [wave34145@gmail.com](mailto:wave34145@gmail.com)

Web-site Administrator, Teresa Sagen, [tkswagen@gmail.com](mailto:tkswagen@gmail.com)

Facebook Administrator, Jan Carey, [jmcfree@aol.com](mailto:jmcfree@aol.com)



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Sandra Martell

Editor

June 23, 2024