



FALL 2024 THE PINE

FROM THE DESK OF KELSEY WAITS, PRESIDENT

Fall is perhaps my favorite season. The cold brisk mornings mean it's time to start wearing my favorite, cozy sweatshirts; an abundance of beautiful color greets me each time I walk outside; and my kitchen smells like cinnamon and apples on an almost daily basis. Of course, for those of us engaged in politics, the changing leaves also remind us of the change that an upcoming election can bring.

I am ashamed to admit that I didn't use to be politically active, either as an advocate or a voter. In fact, after turning 18 in 2004 and voting in the presidential election, I didn't vote again until 2016. I don't know how many elections I turned my back on. As a young woman, I had convinced myself that my voice didn't matter. I was wrong and it will always be something that I deeply regret. I frequently find myself wondering how our politics could be different now if people like me had chosen to vote. Maybe we would have long since passed an Equal Rights Amendment. Maybe reproductive freedoms could have been protected nationwide. Maybe our schools would have seen higher funding and more equitable outcomes. We'll never really know what could have been, we can only work towards achieving those goals now.

As a non-profit organization, AAUW cannot be partisan. We can, however, be political. Reproductive rights, public education funding, equal pay, racial equity, LGBTQ+ rights... as politically charged as each of these issues may

seem, none of them are partisan. In fact, these are political issues that AAUW has already been advocating for as we take an intersectional lens to gender equity. They are also all issues that are on the ballot this fall.

I know that the stakes of this election are high and many AAUW members are concerned about what the political landscape could look like in January. I want to assure you that, while the results of the election may change the strategy AAUW takes in our political advocacy work, it will not change the fact that our work will continue. As a long-time non-voter, I feel especially responsible for leading this effort and I am honored to have found a home with AAUW MN.

Over the next two years as AAUW-MN President, I hope to build on the work I completed as Vice President of Public Policy. I will work to support each of our branches around the state, find ways to increase the visibility of our organization, strengthen our relationships with partner advocacy organizations, and do all I can to help AAUW MN become well-known leader for issues related to gender equity in Minnesota.

If you or your branch would ever like to connect, please reach out. I'm looking forward to working with you and advancing our mission to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

SAVE THE DATE:
AAUW OF
MINNESOTA
STATE MEETING
APRIL 25 & 26, 2025
AUSTIN, MN



The Austin Branch of AAUW cordially invites you to the AAUW of Minnesota 2025 State Meeting in Austin, the home of Spam.

Friday evening will be at the Austin Country Club and the Saturday meeting will be at the world-renowned Hormel Institute cancer research center.

You will experience many inspiring speakers and will be able to tour the Institute on Saturday. The ever popular silent auction will return.

Friday afternoon, optional excursions of the Spam Museum and other Austin sites will be available.

Please join us!



The AAUW of Minnesota Board Needs You!

Our vision—Equity for all

Will you get on-Board?

Joining the AAUW of Minnesota State Board will connect you with terrific members from around the state who work to promote AAUW's mission—To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. It's time for you to share your talents!

We are seeking candidates to serve on the state board of directors for the following positions:

President-Elect 2025-2026 (one year term and becomes President 2026-2028)

Vice President Program 2025-2027 (a two-year term)

Vice President Public Policy 2025-2027 (a two-year term)

Treasurer 2025-2027 (a two-year term)

Nominating Committee 2025-2026 for 2026 elections (3 members and 1 alternate)

All you need is a strong belief in the mission of AAUW and a willingness to learn and grow. Rewards for state service include leadership development, camaraderie, and teamwork with other leaders. An applicant may be self-nominated, nominated by your branch or branch board of directors, or any individual.

Nominations are open until November 18, 2024. The nominating committee will present a slate of candidates to the membership by email no later than 60 days prior to AAUW MN State Meeting to be held April 25-26, 2025, in Austin, MN, hosted by AAUW Austin Branch.

Please give serious consideration to applying for a state board position or to serving on the nominating committee. We would like to have broad statewide representation on the state board and the nominating committee. AAUW leadership positions provide a great opportunity for you to share your talents with AAUW of Minnesota. We need you. Together we can make a difference in the lives of women and girls. Thank you!

Contact any Nominating Committee member to express your interest in a position or get a nomination form prior to November 18, 2024, or email aauwminn@gmail.com. If you have questions, contact the Nominating Committee or board members who currently hold the position in which you are interested.

Nominating Committee:

Mary Chorewycz St. Paul marychorewycz@gmail.com

Teresa Sagen Ely tkswagen@gmail.com

Karen Kirkwood St. Paul & St. Cloud KarenSKirkwood@cs.com

Kelsey Waits Minneapolis & St. Paul kelsey.waits@gmail.com

A Message from Jan Carey, AAUW MN VP Public Policy

I'm back! AAUW MN president Kelsey Waits has appointed me as your AAUW MN VP of Public Policy 2024-25. This vacancy occurred as a result of the spring officers' elections. Kelsey had completed her first year of a two-year term of office when she was elected our state president. She contacted me, knowing I had served for two terms as VP Public Policy and asked if I would complete her two-year term. I agreed.

So, I'm back! And I am ready and energized to continue AAUW advocacy. With days to go before this critical presidential election, we still have a lot to do.

I will not go into the imperative before us. Only to say our local, state and Congressional elections are equally important. We must preserve our MN trifecta, regain the U.S. House of Representatives and gain U.S. Senate seats.

I encountered a 'glitch' in my membership designation and thus, did not receive notices from National to monthly Public Policy State Leaders Zoom meetings. But all is corrected, and I will be attending those meetings and sending updates from those meetings to AAUW MN Branch Public Policy leaders. My updates will also be posted on the AAUW MN website. Our Branch

leaders Zoom meetings will resume in preparation to the MN Legislative session.

In December/early January, branch leaders will receive notice of the Resolution Process. Resolutions will be presented at the AAUW MN State Annual Meeting [Convention] 2025. Please begin branch conversations to the process and submission of Resolutions.

I extend my thanks to branches who have been active in Voter Education projects and events. Some of you participated in Voter registration presentations to high school student with the MN League of Women Voters. High School Collaborative — League of Women Voters Minnesota (LWVMN). Some of you who attended the MN State Fair, volunteered at the Secretary of State Voter Information booth. Many of you utilized branch meetings as an opportunity to collectively conduct two-minute activist.

This is a quick, easy, effective method of advocacy AAUW members can complete. Congressional leaders and state legislators read these posts. Conduct an AAUW Two-Minute Activist often!

<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

Regardless of what happens November 5, 2024, AAUW MN members must continue our advocacy efforts to the mission of AAUW and seek action and remedy to our Public Policy Priorities & Annual goals.

<https://aauw-mn.aauw.net/files/2024/05/Final-2024-2026-AAUW-MN-Public-Policy-Priorities.pdf>

Thanks for your continued work.

**A Message from Barb Wonson Liukkonen, AAUW MN Funds VP
Not too late to contribute for 2024.**

Although most branches are just in the beginning of their program year, our AAUW Funds operate on the national fiscal year (the calendar year), so we are winding down for our 2024 fund raising. I encourage any of you who want to

honor a friend or family member or give a gift in memory of someone who made a difference in your life, to use the online donation option on the AAUW.org website. Any contributions made by December 16, 2024, will add to your Branch's total contribution for the year.

Named Gift Honorees - Each Branch that contributes at least \$750 to one of four national AAUW Funds will be able to recognize a Named Gift Honoree, and that \$750 includes contributions made directly by individuals. Each month your Branch AAUW Funds Chair receives a print-out of all funds credited to your Branch, so she can track those direct contributions as well as those sent in by the Branch. The four funds that meet MN AAUW's criteria for Named Gift Honoree status are:

- Fund# 9110, AAUW's Greatest Need (which provides much-needed flexibility and responsiveness);
- Fund# 4450 Education and Training (including Fellowships, Public Policy, Research);
- Fund# 4449 Economic Security (including LAF, Work Smart and Start Smart); and
- Fund# 4452 Leadership (including NCCWSL, Campus Action Projects, and Empower).

Minnesota Funds AAUW Fellowships - Minnesota AAUW members have always been strong supporters of our AAUW educational grant funding. Did you know that we have initiated and completed eight Research and Project Grants, twelve American Fellowships, and two International Fellowships? All of these fellowships and grants are now stipend-producing, providing much-needed funds for women reaching for their dreams. AAUW has awarded over \$135 million to over 13,000 women - and YOU helped!

American Fellowships support women scholars who are completing dissertations, planning research leave from accredited institutions, or

preparing research for publication. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. AAUW's first fellowship was awarded in 1888.

International Fellowships are awarded for full-time study or research for either graduate or post-graduate studies in the United States to women who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents. The International Fellowships program awarded its first fellowship in 1917. The program includes women from around the world, and International Fellowships have been awarded to more than 3,600 women from more than 150 nations.

Research & Project Grants provide funds for community action or campus action projects, research publication, or other research efforts.

Minnesota is an AAUW Funds Star!

Over the past 15 years, even as our Minnesota AAUW membership numbers have declined, branches and individuals have stepped up to support AAUW Funds. In fact, we have - amazingly! - increased our per capita contribution here in Minnesota from \$27 (per member) in 2010 to \$54 (per member) in 2023.

Thanks for all your support of AAUW Funds and the great work we achieve together. Keep up the good work!

State Board Meeting Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024

The Board meeting was held at the Renaissance Hotel in Bloomington, MN and with ZOOM.

President Kelsey Waits reported that she is holding a day and evening meetings each month with Branch presidents in order to accommodate everyone. She has discussed with them the difference between partisan and nonpartisan activities. She announced that the League of Women Voters has requested volunteers to serve as observers of the vote compilation process. She also announced that ERA MN will be holding a meeting Nov 9th. Jan Carey indicated that she plans to attend. She began a discussion of increasing the

Leader on Loan program next year and on trying to determine what branches are doing to recruit membership, as well as what they have found not to be helpful.

V.P. Program Karen Kirkwood advised that the Helping the Branches booklet includes dates for all grant applications except NCCWSL. National has not set a date for NCCWSL.

V.P Public Policy Jan Carey, has accepted a ‘Leader-on-Loan’ request, from Brainerd branch, to provide presentations at Central Lakes College and the Brainerd Lakes Area branch meeting, March 19,2025. Jan has posted an introductory message to branch public policy leaders She has also forwarded postings, from AAUW Public Policy partners, to branch public policy leaders, communicated with Gender Justice, the Secretary of State, MN League of Women Voters and distributed a letter from the AAUW Inclusion/Equity Committee which included several links to voter issues and information.

The Board appointed Pat Powers V.P. Membership.

V. P. Membership Pat Powers reported that there are Membership Brochures available to branches. She plans to consult with branch VPs Membership with regard to recruiting activities that have been productive and those that have not been. On Nov 2 she will fill a Leader on Loan request from Northfield Branch.

V.P. AAUW Funds Barb Wonson-Liukkonen reported that she has set up an email list for Branch Funds chairs, or appropriate Branch contacts, sent out the first email to Branch contacts and received confirmation from 18 branches. She has not had responses yet from Northfield, Owatonna, Thief River Falls, or Virginia. She also reported that in reviewing the monthly donation reports from the National office, she identified a serious error in attribution for the contributions made following our April 2024 state meeting silent auction. The National “gift team” credited the individuals (and their branches) who purchased the silent auction items, rather than the Branch that provided the auction item. National has assured her that the error will be corrected.

Secretary/Historian, Sandra Martell reported that the only issue with regard to archiving has been the Metro West Branch's concern that much of the branch's records cannot be archived at the MN Historical Society.

Administrative Assistant Teresa Sagen reported that she has updated MN SOS Assumed Name and Contacts, published the 2024-25 State Directory and distributed it to Branch Presidents/Contacts, published 2025 Helping Our Branches and distributed it to Branch Presidents/Contacts, distributed Mail Chimp communications to AAUW MN members (Call for Nominations, etc.), assisted Branch Presidents and Treasurers with their questions about the HUB.

Sue Grove, President of the Austin Branch brought the Board up to date on plans for the State Meeting in Austin April 25 & 26, 2025.

What Branches are Doing & Reading

BRAINERD

The 2024-25 Programs & Meetings Theme is Community Resources Enhancing Economic Stability. This winter the Branch will be reading Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But were Afraid to Ask by Anton Treuer and The Woman They Could Not Silence by Kate Moore.

ELY

Hosted the Annual Northland Get Together, a day-long event in which the six northern Minnesota AAUW branches gathered for a program on advocacy in our communities. In September the Branch held the Candidate Forum for Ely City Council at MN North College Auditorium which was also available for viewing on Ely TV Midco Channel 11 and on YouTube.

GRAND RAPIDS

The Branch is reading The Women by Kristen Hannah.

HASTINGS

Programs this fall include Therapy Dogs with Tanya Bailey and Maureen Kleckner and “Who Cares, Who Pays?” from University of Minnesota Center for Women and Gender Public Policy.

RED WING

This winter the Branch is reading The Dictionary of Lost Words by Pip Williams and How the Penguins Saved Veronica by Hazel Prior.

ROCHESTER

In October the Branch will hear from Superintendent Pekel regarding the education referendum on the ballot in November. At the November meeting a girl from Kenya will share how she overcame challenges to earn her Ph.D. in immunology.

ST PAUL

Programs this fall include Artificial Intelligence: Life Transforming with Elizabeth Sherry, Event Strategist for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce And Describing What is Known—and Still Unknown—About Urban Trees and Forests with Alicia Coleman, Assistant Professor of Urban and Community Forestry, University of Minnesota.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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