

CULTIVATING HOPE

Through History



The 96th AAUW of Minnesota State Meeting
Austin, Minnesota – April 25–26, 2025

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From the Office of the Mayor



500 Fourth Avenue NE
Austin, Minnesota 55912-3773
Phone: 507-437-9965
Fax: 507-434-7197
www.ci.austin.mn.us

Proclamation

WHEREAS: *The American Association of University Women's story began in 1881, when a small group of female college graduates banded together to open the doors for women's career advancement and to encourage more women to pursue higher education; and*

WHEREAS: *the AAUW has supported the academic achievements of many thousands of scholars, from scientist Marie Curie, the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, to astronaut Judith Resnik, the second woman in space; and*

WHEREAS: *the Austin Branch of AAUW was founded in 1937 to support education for women and girls; and*

WHEREAS: *the AAUW advocacy efforts have propelled countless new laws, including the Equal Pay Act, first proposed in 1945 and finally passed in 1963; the Title IX amendment in 1972; the Family and Medical Leave Act in 1993; the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2009; and the Paycheck Fairness Act, which was passed by the U.S. Representatives in 2019 but is awaiting action in the Senate; and*

WHEREAS: *the AAUW Mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy; and*

NOW THEREFORE, I, Stephen M. King, Mayor of the City of Austin, Minnesota do hereby proclaim April 25 and 26, 2025 as:

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN DAYS IN AUSTIN, MINNESOTA



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen M. King", is written over a horizontal line.

Stephen M. King
Mayor

Agenda
96th AAUW of Minnesota State Meeting
April 25 – 26, 2025
Cultivating Hope Through History

Friday, April 25, 2025

- 2:00 pm Registration opens at Doubletree (optional – can register at dinner)
Optional Tour of Hormel Historic Home, Spam Museum, and Sweet Reads Bookstore
- 5:00 pm Social Hour, Cash Bar – Austin Country Club
- 6:00 pm Dinner and historical portrayal of Gertrude Ellis Skinner in conjunction with Mower County Historical Society

Saturday, April 26, 2025

- 7:30 am Registration reopens at the Hormel Institute
Deliver Silent Auction items to the Seminar Room, The Hormel Institute
Breakfast Buffet
- 8:30 am Welcome from Austin Branch President Sue Grove and Mayor Steve King,
Flag Ceremony featuring local Girl Scout Troop 47902, and Welcome from
AAUW MN President Kelsey Waits
- 9:00 am Business Meeting
- 10:00 am Awards and Trailer of film, *Zurawski v Texas*
- 10:30 am Break, Visit Silent Auction in Seminar Room
- 11:00 am Keynote Speaker, Mary Cathryn D. Ricker, Executive Director
Albert Shanker Institute
- Noon Buffet Lunch
- 1:00 pm Dr. Leena Hilakivi-Clarke, The Hormel Institute
- 1:15 pm Dr. Annie W. Lin, The Hormel Institute
- 1:30 pm Tours of Hormel Institute and Close of Silent Auction
- 2:45 pm Closing Remarks



AAUW of Minnesota's President's Welcome and Report

On behalf of the AAUW of Minnesota Board of Directors and Committee Chairs, I'm excited to welcome you to the 96th AAUW Minnesota State Meeting.

Last year, our state meeting theme was "Confluence = Inclusion, Collaboration and Empowerment." Over the last year, I've used this theme to guide my work as President of AAUW Minnesota. While AAUW is one of the oldest women's advocacy organizations in the country, and in our state, we are not the only organization that advocates for gender equity, education, reproductive freedom, or fair pay. Our political power is stronger when we stand together, but too often, it seems that advocacy organizations like ours work in silos. For this reason, I have been building relationships with like-minded organizations to explore partnership opportunities for our advocacy efforts. I have been regularly meeting with the League of Women Voters and MN Now. I have also been appointed to the ERA MN working group.

Importantly, AAUW MN is not only strengthening relationships with other organizations, but we are building connections between our branches. Each month, I hold two zoom meetings for branch presidents where they can ask questions, share ideas, talk about membership recruitment, and even plan events to host together. In the coming months, one of these events will be a film screening of "Zurawski v. Texas." I had the pleasure of attending the Northland Gathering in Ely this Fall and the Tri-Branch Luncheon and Program in Owatonna in April. I've met with branches to connect one-on-one, and I have had the pleasure of presenting to three different branches around the state on public policy topics.

During this political moment, I think it is more important than ever for AAUW MN to be visible as a place for like-minded women to gather and fight for our shared values of intersectionality, inclusivity, and empowerment through education, advocacy, and research. I cannot think of a better theme for this year's annual meeting than "Cultivating Hope Through History."

Over the last few decades, our country has made tremendous strides towards gender equity, but persistent gender gaps continue to demand our attention. The road map remains the same, although our federal government is currently taking away some of the "street signs" - erasing words from critical documents and databases, words like - "barriers, Black and Latinx, equal opportunity, female, gender, indigenous community, justice, trauma, women." But we know our way through the dark. We've been here before, and we know how to shine a light on what matters as we work together to create safe, healthy, equitable communities where everyone belongs.

AAUW's strength as an organization is dependent on the strength and dedication of our membership. The work you do to advance equity for women and girls, has benefits that extend beyond your communities. Like a pebble thrown into a pond, your work creates ripples that have a wide-reaching impact. I'm proud to work beside you in this work and I am excited for what the next year will bring.

Kelsey Waits
AAUW MN President

AAUW MN State Meeting Speakers



Penny Kinney has been active in SE Minnesota theatres—on stage and off—for over 50 years. Her theatre roots were planted at Austin State Jr. College (now Riverland Community College) and in Austin Summerset Theatre—back in 1969. She has served in every capacity in theatre from chorus member to producer. Penny worked for Hormel Foods for 35 years, retired, then worked as a SPAMBassador at the SPAM Museum for four more years. Now serving as board president for Austin Area Arts, Penny has been an enthusiast, supporter, advocate, attendee, volunteer, and participant in all the arts her whole life.



Randal J. Forster, (playwright & director) is the Executive Director for the Mower County Historical Society and theatre enthusiast. He has been active with Summerset Theatre since 2003, currently serving as its Co-Executive Director. He recently directed *Carrie: The Musical*, *Annie*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, and *The Thanksgiving Play*, at the Frank W. Bridges Theatre in Austin. In 2020 he performed as Dirty Dan alongside Kinney in the encore production of *Pecos Bill and Slue Foot Sue Meet the Dirty Dan Gang* at Matchbox Children's Theatre. [📄](#)

Mary Cathryn Ricker
Executive Director, Albert Shanker Institute



Mary Cathryn Ricker is a National Board Certified middle school English/language arts teacher who has served as Minnesota’s Commissioner of Education, as Executive vice-president of the American Federation of Teachers, and as president of the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers, Local 28. Prior to her leadership outside of the classroom, Ricker was a classroom teacher for 13 years in Minnesota, Washington State, and South Korea.

As Minnesota’s Commissioner of Education, Mary Cathryn Ricker lead a school finance working group examining Minnesota’s school finance systems and recommending reforms. She advocated for a more student and family facing

department of education, resulting in increased, direct outreach including translated materials and translation services. Additionally, Ricker worked alongside advocates in the effort for legislation for Indigenous Education for All, ethnic studies, credit attainment for students experiencing housing instability or homelessness, expanding social/emotional learning, strengthening teacher diversity efforts, including cultural competency in teacher and principal evaluations and non-exclusionary discipline policies—winning a prohibition on public preschool suspensions and dismissals in a special legislative session. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ricker lead an effort to act on the science, create safe and healthy learning conditions, and prioritize in-person learning by establishing localized learning models, listening and responding to the community—including building MDE’s most ambitious and diverse family-facing communication work—providing statewide professional development in meeting the needs of students with special needs, students experiencing housing instability, students learning English as a new language, and Black, Indigenous, and students of color, and investing in necessary health and safety items like technology, protective equipment, and COVID testing.

When Mary Cathryn was executive vice-president of the AFT, under the leadership of AFT President Randi Weingarten, she created and lead the AFT Professionalism Task Force and organized the AFT Gun Violence Prevention Advisory Committee. Ricker also lead the AFT Innovation Fund, focusing on expanding and supporting career and technical education and full-service community schools. Additionally, she coordinated local, state and national unions support for refugee children at the border, lead involvement in ethnic studies movement, advocated and organized for comprehensive immigration reform and for strengthening education for English language learners. She organized a member/staff working group for Native American advocacy and represented AFT in professional membership work, including as Program and Policy Council division liaison.

As president of the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers, Ricker pioneered the concept of bargaining for the common good, an approach to negotiating where union members share the power they have at the negotiating table with students, families, and community members to negotiate around a set of

demands that benefit members, students, and the broader community. She led the effort to win contract language such as citizenship leave and a school nurse for every child, and she championed innovative, teacher-built solutions that improve teaching and learning as well as strengthen public education. These include the union's alternative teacher recruitment and licensure program, CareerTeacher; a full-spectrum peer assistance and review program; site-based school redesign and governance; a parent-teacher home visit project; comprehensive professional development; paraprofessional pathways to teaching, dedicated paraprofessional professional development; and meaningful community engagement as the union's work.

Ricker also serves on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards board of directors. Her teaching and leadership have been recognized with a number of other honors, including receiving the Education Minnesota Peterson-Schaubach Outstanding Leadership Award, qualifying as a semifinalist for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence, and serving as a featured contributor in the Annenberg Foundation's national professional development series "Write in the Middle." She has spoken and written extensively about teaching and learning, professionalism, and human rights issues and her work has appeared in local and national publications. She has traveled to speak, teach, or study public education, the labor movement, and democracy, including in Europe, North and South America, and Western Asia/the Arabian Peninsula.

A native of Hibbing, Minnesota, she earned her undergraduate degree in English with a mathematics minor at the University of Saint Thomas and completed graduate work in Teacher Leadership at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Leena Hilakivi-Clarke

“Diet to Reduce Cancer Risk Through Modulating the Gut Microbiome”



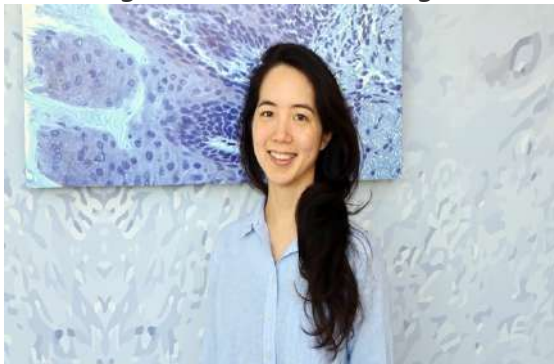
Dr. Leena Hilakivi-Clarke is a Professor and Assistant Director for Faculty Affairs at The Hormel Institute, University of Minnesota. She also has a faculty appointment in the Department of Food Science and Nutrition in the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at University of Minnesota.

Her research involves studying the role of dietary factors in affecting breast cancer risk and mortality. She investigates how maternal diet and obesity during pregnancy can pre-program offspring’s risk of developing breast cancer, focusing on persistent changes in the offspring’s epigenome, gut microbiota and inflammatory pathways. She also studies

possible interventions that could be implemented either during pregnancy or to adult offspring to prevent their increased breast cancer risk and risk of breast cancer recurrence. These interventions include bioactive compounds in foods, such as genistein and vitamin D, beneficial dietary fats, or traditional anti-inflammatory herb mixtures. Another research topic Dr. Hilakivi-Clarke has been studying is the biological changes caused by social isolation and loneliness that could explain why socially isolated individuals are at a significantly increased risk of dying of breast cancer. Along with smoking and obesity, social isolation is linked to adverse health outcomes. Dr. Hilakivi-Clarke collaborates closely with experts in computational modeling and has several past collaborations with epidemiologists to translate her preclinical findings to the clinic.

Dr. Annie W. Lin

“Selecting Food to Fit You: Using Science to Throw Away Food Rules”



Dr. Annie W. Lin is an Assistant Professor and Registered Dietitian at Hormel Institute, University of Minnesota. She holds a dual appointment in the Preventive Medicine department at Northwestern University.

Her research program focuses on using digital strategies to promote healthy dietary behaviors for cancer prevention and survivorship. She currently leads several projects to effectively facilitate personalized conversations about health promotion between patients and clinicians using technology. Her work has

been supported by the National Institute of Health, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the Masonic Cancer Center, and other organizations. Through close collaboration with her team, research partners, and external stakeholders (including participants!), she hopes to facilitate successful translation of nutrition research into clinical practice.

AAUW of Minnesota State Board 2024-2025

Elected Officers

PRESIDENT

Kelsey Waits—St. Paul
651-703-2055
kelsey.waits@gmail.com

TREASURER

Beth Nienow—Rochester
507-923-7810
bethnienow@charter.net

SECRETARY/HISTORIAN

Saundra Martell—Brainerd
952-250-2611
wave34145@gmail.com

VP PROGRAM

Karen Kirkwood—St. Paul
951-891-2876/612-282-9492
KarenSKirkwood@cs.com

VP MEMBERSHIP

Pat Powers—Hastings
651-592-6259
pat.pow01@gmail.com

VP PUBLIC POLICY

Jan Carey—Hibbing
218-966-7159
jmcfree@aol.com

VP AAUW FUNDS

Barb Wonson Liukkonen—Ely
763-464-4368
Liuk001@alumni.umn.edu

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY REP

TBD

Appointed Officers

FINANCE CHAIR

Teresa Sagen— Ely
218-365-6461
tksagen@gmail.com

PINE EDITOR

Saundra Martell—Brainerd
952-250-2611
wave34145@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Teresa Sagen— Ely
218-365-6461
tksagen@gmail.com

Other Off Board Positions

WEBSITE

Jan Carey—Hibbing
218-966-7159
jmcfree@aol.com

BYLAWS CHAIR

Saundra Martell—Brainerd
952-250-2611
wave34145@gmail.com

AAUW of Minnesota Standing Committees

AAUW MN Nominating Committee 2024-2025

Mary Chorewycz, St. Paul Branch

Teresa Sagen, Ely Branch

Kelsey Waits, St. Paul Branch

Karen Kirkwood, St. Paul Branch

Financial Review Chair and Committee for FY24

Chair Jan Bensen, St. Cloud Branch

Caroline Owens, Ely Branch

Barb Wismer, St. Cloud Branch

Janice Quist, St. Paul Branch

Teresa Sagen, Ely Branch

2025 Annual Meeting

Parliamentarian

Barb Wonson Liukkonen, Ely Branch

Pages, Tellers, Timer

AAUW Austin members

Thanks to AAUW Austin

AAUW of Minnesota would like to thank the Austin Branch for welcoming our AAUW MN members and for the many hours spent to ensure that the 2025 State Meeting would be an enjoyable experience for all.

AAUW of Minnesota College/University Representatives 2024-2025

Central Lakes College

Brainerd, MN
Mary Sam
msam@clcmn.edu

College of Saint Benedict

St. Cloud, MN
Angela Whitney
awhitney@csbsju.edu

Dakota County Technical College

Rosemount, MN
Anne Johnson
anne.johnson@dctc.edu

Gustavus Adolphus College

St. Peter, MN
Brenda Kelly
bkelly@gustavus.edu
Jill Locke
jlocke@gustavus.edu

MN North College – Vermilion

Ely, MN
Kate Cowley
kate.cowley@minnesotanorth.edu
Carly Wogen
carly.wogen@minnesotanorth.edu

Ridgewater College

Willmar, MN
Lori Park-Smith
lori.park-smith@ridgewater.edu
Lizeth E Rios
lizeth.rios@ridgewater.edu

Riverland Community College

Austin, MN
Catherine Haslag
cshaslag@gmail.com
Amy Wagner
amy.wagner@riverland.edu

St. Cloud State University

St. Cloud, MN
Chris Lepkowski
cclepkowski@stcloudstate.edu

St. Olaf College

Northfield, MN
Marci Sortor
sortor@stolaf.edu
Rosalyn Eaton
reaton@stolaf.edu

University of Minnesota Duluth

Duluth, MN
Susana Pelayo-Woodward
swoodwar@d.umn.edu

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Minneapolis, MN
Anne Lifson
alifson@umn.edu

AAUW of Minnesota Past Presidents

1923-25 Mrs. F. G. Atkinson (Rood)	1976-78 Martha Nelson Ward (Virginia)
1925-27 Mrs. James King (St. Paul)	1978-80 Nancy Selby (Rochester)
1927-29 Mrs. James Richardson (Minneapolis)	1980-82 Helen Rudie (Moorhead)
1929-31 Mrs. Schuyler Woodhull (Minneapolis)	1982-84 Joann Paden (Minneapolis)
1931-33 Mrs. H. F. Heimholtz (Rochester)	1984-86 Susan Lemke (Rochester)
1933-36 Mrs. H. K. Painter (Minneapolis)	1986-88 Jane Maddy (Duluth)
1936-37 Mrs. Herman Stark (St. Paul)	1988-90 Barbara Halweg (Minneapolis)
1937-38 Mrs. John McCrory (St. Cloud)	1990-92 Kay Cooper (Burnsville)
1938-39 Mrs. Harry Kavel (Minneapolis)	1992-94 Alice Ellis (Red Wing)
1940-42 Mrs. Warren Wilson (Northfield)	1994-96 Nancy Rustad (St. Croix Valley)
1942-44 Mrs. Frederic Weld (Minneapolis)	1996-98 Barb Link (Minneapolis)
1944-46 Mrs. Willard Matter (Duluth)	1998-00 Linda Thielbar (Red Wing)
1946-48 Mrs. Lawrence Steefel (Minneapolis)	2000-02 Sharon Finch (Duluth)
1948-50 Mrs. Frank O. Jones (Fairmont)	2002-04 Terri Griffiths (Duluth)
1950-54 Florence Schneider (Duluth)	2004-06 Pat Sween (Red Wing)
1954-56 Isabel Koski (Ely)	2006-08 Beverly Crute (Willmar)
1956-58 Mrs. A. J. Cole (St. James)	2008-10 Karen Kirkwood (St. Paul)
1959-60 Mrs. E. R. Komarek (St. Cloud)	Mary Parcheta (St. Croix Valley)
1960-62 Phyllis Gausman Morris	2010-12 Carol Sheggeby (St. Paul)
1962-64 Dode Wonson (Minneapolis)	2012-14 Teresa Sagen (Ely)
1964-66 Betty Christian (Rochester)	Caroline Owens (Ely)
1966-68 Gladys Swanson (Duluth)	2014-16 Sharon Bigot (Minneapolis)
1968-70 Charlotte Reeve (Hibbing)	2016-18 Jan Bensen (St. Cloud)
1970-72 Alberta McNeal (Minneapolis)	2018-20 Lisa West (Hastings)
1972-74 Eleanor Sulerud (St. Paul)	2020-22 Mary Ann Lucas Houx (Duluth)
1974-76 Enid Swanson (Bemidji)	2024-26 Jan Carey (Hibbing)

AAUW MN Branch Milestones

100 Years or More

Duluth, Faribault, Hibbing, Minneapolis, Northfield, Rochester, St. Cloud, Saint Paul, Winona

75 – 99 Years –

Austin, Ely, Grand Rapids, Red Wing Area, St. Croix Valley, Willmar

(Disbanded 2024– Albert Lea and Metro West)

50 – 74 Years –

Brainerd Area, Fergus Falls, Hastings, Owatonna, Virginia Area

25 – 49 Years –

Alexandria, Thief River Falls

AAUW Minnesota 96th Annual State Meeting
April 26, 2025, Business Session
9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

Call to Order

Recognition of Past State Presidents and State Board members

Recognition of Past and Current National Board Members

Recognition of College and University Representatives

Introduction of Current Board Members and Annual Meeting Parliamentarian

Roll Call of Branches

Credentials Report

Adoption of Annual Meeting Standing Rules

Adoption of Consent Agenda

1. Business Agenda
2. Appointments-Time Keeper, Tellers, Pages
3. AAUW MN 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes, Condensed

State Reports

Treasurer's Report

AAUW Funds Report

New Business

Report of the 2023/24 Financial Records Review Committee

2025-2026 Budget

Report of the Nominating Committee & Introduction of Candidates

Nominations and Election of Officers and Nominating Committee

Resolutions

Additional Business Items

Recognition of Outgoing State Board Members

Introduction of State Board Members for 2025-2026

Annual Meeting 2026 – TBA

Adjournment

STANDING RULES OF THE 96th AAUW MINNESOTA STATE MEETING

1. For admission to the assembly hall, each member shall be required to wear the badge issued by the credentials committee upon registration. While in the assembly hall, delegates shall at all times wear their badges. Only the votes of those accredited delegates* wearing badges shall be counted.
2. When a delegate leaves the assembly room, no other person is authorized to act in the delegate's place.
3. The president may present a consent agenda at the beginning of the business meeting. Upon the request of any delegate, items may be removed from the consent agenda. Items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the President and approval of the assembly.
4. Communication to the platform shall be in writing and transmitted by the pages only.
5. Voting cards will be used in all meetings. For the initial vote, voters will raise voting cards while remaining seated. The presiding officer will direct other voting procedures (such as a standing or counted vote) as necessary for verification of results. If unable to stand, raising the hand shall be considered the same as standing when a vote is taken.
6. No one shall be permitted to enter or leave the assembly during a vote. The doors may be closed if a designated emergency exit is available.
7. Anyone requesting the floor shall address the chair from a microphone and upon the President's recognition, shall state their name, branch and voting status.
8. Motions must be made in writing on triplicate forms provided. Two copies of the written motion shall be handed to a page who will immediately hand one copy to the President and one to the Secretary. The remaining copy is kept by the delegate making the motion.
9. Resolutions may be made from the floor. The presenter must be prepared to share the wording of the proposed resolution by distributing copies to all delegates or projecting it on a screen. A two thirds (2/3) approval of the meeting accredited delegates present and voting is required for the resolution to be brought forward for discussion. No one may speak to the resolution until the vote passes to hear it. A three fourths (3/4) vote of the meeting accredited delegates present and voting is required for adoption of resolutions from the floor.
10. Only duly accredited delegates shall be entitled to make motions and vote. Alternate delegates and non-delegate members may not make motions, second motions, or vote, but they may speak to a motion.
11. A maximum of two minutes shall be allowed each speaker on a motion. If the speaker has not finished a sentence when time is called by the appointed timekeeper, the speaker will be allowed to complete the sentence.
12. No one will speak twice to the same motion until everyone else who desires to speak on the motion has been heard, provided that the time limit allowed for the particular item of business on the floor has not been exceeded. The chair may establish a time limit for debate for each item, subject to approval of the delegates. The parliamentary rules of debate will apply by allowing pro and con speakers to be recognized alternately, insofar as practical.
13. Tellers, pages, and a timekeeper shall be appointed at the beginning of the state business meeting by the President. Tellers may assist in counting the votes when requested to do so.

* The terms "accredited delegates" or "delegates" in this and subsequent rules include 1) registered branch delegates as certified by branch presidents; 2) members of the state board of directors and chairs of state committees; 3) college/university representatives; 4) any member(s)-at-large appointed by the State President, and 5) past state presidents who are currently members of AAUW of Minnesota.

AAUW MINNESOTA
95TH Annual State Meeting
Confluence Hotel
Hastings, MN April 26-27, 2024

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's 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 it is set forth in the proposed Minnesota ERA Constitutional Amendment can secure these vital rights.

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

After the business meeting, the Keynote Speaker for Saturday, 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, and hold more union jobs); and
- 4- Plain old discrimination (get paid less for the same job, e.g. Lily Ledbetter, women's national soccer team).

She stated that the wage gap creates both a lifetime earnings loss and a lifetime retirement loss for women, which affects family income and family legacy earnings. She indicated that there are public policy and private actions by employers and employees that can be taken to reduce the wage gap. She concluded that the United States provides less protection for women's rights than most other industrialized countries.

We also heard from Michelle Witte, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota, who 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 spoke about the three generations of women in her family who have worked for equity and how important that legacy is to her and for her daughter.

The final program included a panel of Hastings women entrepreneurs. Moderator, Jan Hertel, posed questions to owners Jen Fox, Spiral Microbrewery; Nicole Sindelar, Hastings Golf Club; Barb Hollenbeck, Second Childhood Toy Store; Sara Lawrence, Muse 2320 Fiber Company and to 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. The panel discussion was an interesting and fast paced successful ending to the 2024 AAUW of Minnesota Annual State Meeting.

Business Meeting Minutes

Roll Call of Branches. Sandra Martell, Secretary, called the roll of Minnesota AAUW branches and 20 branches responded as present: Albert Lea, Austin, Brainerd, Ely, Faribault, Fergus Falls, Grand Rapids, Hastings, Hibbing, Metro West, Minneapolis, Northfield, Owatonna, Red Wing Area, Rochester, Saint Cloud Area, Saint Croix Valley, Saint Paul, Willmar, and Winona. Sandra announced that a quorum for conducting business is 2/5's of branches and that a quorum was present.

Credentials Report. Teresa Sagen, Administrative Assistant, announced that 121 members registered and are in attendance. There are six guests. Eighty eligible voters are in attendance consisting of seventy Branch delegates, four Past State Presidents and six State Board Members. **Motion: Laura Arne of Wilmar Branch moved and Glenna Case of Minneapolis Branch seconded the motion to adopt the Credentials Report. The vote to adopt the Credentials Report was unanimous.**

Standing Rules. Motion: Teresa Sagen of the Standing Rules Committee moved the adoption of the Standing Rules printed on page 12 of the 95th AAUW of Minnesota Annual Meeting booklet. Because the motion came from a committee, a second was not required. The vote to adopt the Standing Rules was unanimous.

Minutes of 2023 Annual State Meeting. Motion: State Secretary, Sandra Martell, moved that the minutes of the 2023 Annual State Meeting be accepted as printed on pages 13-15 of the 95th AAUW of Minnesota Annual Meeting booklet. Because the motion came from a committee, a second was not required. The vote to accept the Minutes of the 2023 Annual State Meeting was unanimous.

State Treasurer's Report. Beth Nienow, State Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report printed on page 16 of the 95th AAUW of Minnesota Annual Meeting booklet. The Treasurer's Report was placed on file.

AAUW Funds Report. Rajani Sohni, State AAUW Funds Vice President, presented the AAUW Funds Report and Named Grant Honorees printed on page 30 of the 95th AAUW of Minnesota Annual Meeting booklet. She noted that the largest amount donated and the most members making donations both came from Rochester Branch.

Financial Records Review Report. Jan Bensen, chair of the Financial Records Review Committee presented the Financial Records Review report which is printed on pages 17-18 of the 95th AAUW of Minnesota Annual Meeting booklet.

State Budget. Motion: Janice Quist, Finance Committee Chair, presented the proposed budget printed on page 19 of the 95th AAUW of Minnesota Annual Meeting booklet. Because the motion came from a committee, a second was not required. The vote to adopt the state budget was unanimous.

Nominations. Pat Powers, Vice President for Membership, presented the nominees for the Board; Kelsey Waits for President, Barb Wonson Liukkonen for Vice President AAUW Funds, Sandra Martell for Secretary/Historian and Mary Chorewycz for Nominations Committee. President Jan Carey called for nominations from the floor. None were offered.

Motion: The vote to have the Secretary cast an elective ballot for the nominees was unanimous.

Sandra Martell, Secretary, cast the elective ballot for Kelsey Waits as President, for Barb Wonson Liukkonen as Vice President of AAUW Funds, for Sandra Martell as Secretary/Historian and for Mary Chorewycz for Nominating Committee. President Jan Carey declared these officers and the Nominating Committee duly elected.

Public Policy. Vice President for Public Policy Kelsey Waits presented the Public Policy and Biennial Action Priorities for 2024-2026 printed on pages 21-22 of The 95th AAUW of Minnesota Annual Meeting booklet. **Motion: Kelsey Waits moved the acceptance of the 2024-2026 Public Policy and Biennial Action Priorities. The vote to adopt the Public Policy and Biennial Action Priorities for 2024-2026 was unanimous.**

Resolutions. Vice President Kelsey Waits, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, presented the report of the Resolutions Committed as printed on page 23 of The 95th AAUW of Minnesota Annual Meeting booklet. **Motion: Kelsey Waits then moved as directed by the Resolutions Committee that the Resolution "Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW Minnesota vigorously supports passing the ERA to the Minnesota Constitution." be adopted. The vote to adopt the resolution was unanimous.** President Jan Carey called for Resolutions from the Floor. No resolutions were offered from the floor.

President Jan Carey declared the meeting concluded sine die.

Respectively submitted,
Sandra Martell
Secretary/Historian
June 10, 2024

AAUW Minnesota
Fiscal Year 2024
June 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

	Actual	FY24 Budget
Income		
Refund of Convention Advance		\$ 1,000.00
Convention Profit		\$ 2,000.00
Contributions	\$ 1,275.00	
Membership Dues	\$ 13,983.00	\$ 11,317.00
Interest/Dividend Income	\$ 12.46	\$ 2.00
Misc Income/Passthrough/Silent Auction	\$ 3,800.54	

Total Income	\$ 19,071.00	\$ 14,319.00
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Expenses		
Regional Convention		
10 Regional Convention	\$ 1,583.60	\$ 3,000.00
State Meeting		
21 Host Branch Advance	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Compensation to Hastings, extra expenses	\$ 83.94	
23 Board Expenses	\$ 910.00	\$ 1,000.00
27 Award Recipient Costs/Gifts (YWE)	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00
Keynote speaker payments	\$ 400.00	
Confluence downpayment	\$ 2,500.00	
State Annual Mtg/Convention Total	\$ 7,477.54	\$ 5,500.00

Board of Directors		
40A Mileage	\$ 2,301.50	\$ 1,200.00
40B Meals	\$ 314.09	\$ 900.00
40C Lodging/Meeting Room	\$ 998.62	\$ 1,500.00
43 Financial Records Review	\$ 95.89	\$ 100.00
45 State Leader on Loan		\$ 250.00
48 Web Site	\$ 238.16	\$ 1,000.00
Total Board of Directors	\$ 3,948.26	\$ 4,950.00

Administration		
50 Postage	\$ 160.31	\$ 120.00
51 Copying/Printing	\$ 1,033.62	\$ 800.00
53 Supplies/Stationery	\$ 327.20	\$ 150.00
54 Assumed Named Certificate		
Administration Total	\$ 1,521.13	\$ 1,070.00

Other Expenses		
Miscellaneous expenses/Pass Through	\$ 1,000.00	
60 Minnesota Pine		\$ 500.00
110 Public Policy		\$ 500.00
70 Coalitions		
75 Donations to AAUW Funds	\$ 2,197.01	
80 Visibility/Marketing		\$ 49.00
700 Branch Project Grants	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
800 NCCWSL Grants	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Other Expenses Total	\$ 14,197.01	\$ 16,049.00

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 27,143.94	\$ 27,569.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 19,071.00	\$ 30,569.00
NET	\$ (8,072.94)	

900	Transfer from Savings/Investments/existing funds at year end if net loss	\$ 8,072.94	\$ 16,250.00
	Statement Balance		\$0

Checking Account Balance 6/30/2024	\$ 24,288.24
Savings Account Balance 6/30/2024	\$ 25,030.22
Total Funds 6/30/2024	\$ 49,318.46

RESERVE REQUIREMENTS \$25,000.00

AAUW MN State Financial Review

Year Ending June 30, 2024

August 7, 2024 St. Paul College Club, 990 Summit Ave. St. Paul MN

Attending: Caroline Owens Beth Nienow, Janice Quist, Barb Wismer by Zoom, Teresa Sagen, Jan Bensen
The meeting was called to order at 10:06 am.

A number of documents were distributed to the committee members prior to the meeting via email and in hard copy at the meeting.

- AAUW MN State Board meeting minutes for 2023-2024
- A summary of Board finance related motions in the minutes
- AAUW MN FY 2023-2024 budget
- AAUW MN FY 2023-2024 fiscal year report
- June 30 bank statements and bank reconciliation
- AAUW MN Requisition Record
- MN 2024 Financial Filing report for non-profit, AAUW MN IRS filing 990-N
- AAUW MN Bylaws, Standing Rules,
- AAUW MN Helping Our Branches report

The committee reviewed the following items and made the following determinations.

- The RFP Requisition Record is a very clear and concise record of requests and corresponding payments. This is a nice improvement to the Treasurer's recordkeeping.
- There are no changes to bylaws or standing rules that affect the financial process
- All expenditures authorized by Board motions have been made.
- Several transactions were traced through the entire process. There were no checks written but not cashed. There was only one incident of a check being issued in one fiscal year but not cashed until several weeks later in the following fiscal year.
- Bank accounts reconcile with AAUW MN reports.
- 990-N and IRS filings are complete and in order.
- Initiatives in the AAUW Helping Our Branches document were supported with grants we saw in the financial report.

The committee had discussions around several questions and refers the items to the MN Board.

- What is the best way to secure MN AAUW documents online? Should the documents be housed on the AAUW MN website? Are documents accessible and safe? Is there a chain of command for access and editing? Should AAUWMN gmail be used for Google Drive?
- Is there a standard accounting way to show transfers from savings to cover a budgeted shortfall of income? What is the best way to make this clear to members in the FY report? The budget is a plan of spending, the income statement is a record of actual results.

The committee finds the Records in good order and thanks the Treasurer and Finance Committee for their good work.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:09 pm.

Submitted By Jan Bensen, Chair

AAUW Minnesota Budget Proposal				
FY 2026				
Teresa Sagen, Finance Chair				
		FY25 Budget	YTD	Proposed
			3/4/2025	FY26 Budget
	(Membership #'s as of 3-04-2025)			
Planning	1427 Dues Paying Membership \$9.00	1412		1427
	129 Honorary Life Members (pay no dues)	182		129
	21 Student Membership \$2.00	34		21
Income	Income			
	Refund of State Meeting Advance	\$ 1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00
	State Meeting Profit	\$		
	Contributions		\$ 700.00	\$ 1,000.00
	Other Contributions/Passthrough		\$ 1,000.00	
	Membership Dues	\$ 12,776.00	\$ 7,816.00	\$ 12,885.00
	Interest/Dividend Income	\$ 5.00	\$ 7.31	\$ 6.00
	⁹⁰⁰ From Reserves (Review rec'd deleting)	\$ 15,800.00		
	Misc. Income		\$	
	Total Income	\$ 29,581.00	\$ 9,523.31	\$ 14,891.00
Expenses	Regional Meeting			
	10 Regional Meeting	\$ 1,700.00	\$	\$
	State Annual Meeting			
	21 Host Branch Advance	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
	23 Board Expenses	\$ 1,000.00	\$	\$ 1,000.00
	27 Speaker Fees/Gifts	\$ 500.00	\$	\$ 500.00
	State/Regional Meetings Total	\$ 4,200.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,500.00
	Board of Directors			
	40A Mileage	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,560.50	\$ 2,000.00
	40B Meals	\$ 900.00	\$ 515.92	\$ 450.00
	40C Lodging/Meeting Room	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 346.59	\$ 1,500.00
	43 Financial Records Review	\$ 100.00	\$ 101.12	\$ 100.00
	45 State Leader on Loan	\$ 250.00	\$ 604.00	\$ 1000.00
	48 Website	\$ 250.00	\$	\$ 100.00
	Total Board of Directors	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 3,173.29	\$ 5,150.00
	Administration			
	50 Postage	\$ 150.00	\$	\$ 100.00
	51 Other Copying/Printing	\$ 100.00	\$	\$ 100.00
	53 Other Expenses	\$ 250.00	\$ 172.89	\$ 200.00
	54 Assumed Named Certificate	\$ 45.00	\$ 35.00	\$
	Total Administration	\$ 545.00	\$ 207.89	\$ 400.00
	Other Expenses			
	Miscellaneous Expenses/Passthrough	\$	\$ 1,000.00	\$
	60 Minnesota Pine	\$	\$	\$
	110 Public Policy	\$ 300.00	\$ 110.05	\$ 300.00
	70 Coalitions			
	75 Donations to AAUW Funds	\$ 1,000.00	\$	\$ 500.00
	80 Visibility/Marketing/Membership	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 184.00	\$ 500.00
	700 Branch Project Grants	\$ 5,000.00	\$	\$ 1,500.00
	800 NCCWSL Grants	\$ 10,000.00	\$	\$ 10,000.00
	Young Women for Equity Awards	\$ 1,500.00	\$	\$ 1,500.00
	Other Expenses Total	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 1,294.05	\$ 14,300.00
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 28,745.00	\$ 5,675.23	\$ 22,350.00
	TOTAL INCOME	\$ 29,581.00	\$ 9,523.31	\$ 14,891.00
	NET	\$ 836.00	\$ 3,848.08	\$ (7,459.00)
	Checking Account Balance 3/4/2025		\$ 29,361.06	
	Savings Account Balance 3/4/2025		\$ 25,038.55	
	Total Funds 3/4/2025		\$ 54,399.61	
	RESERVE REQUIREMENTS \$25,000.00			

2025 Nominating Committee Report

The 2025 AAUW of Minnesota Nominating Committee respectfully submits the following slate of candidates for state officer positions and Nominating Committee positions for 2026 Elections.

PRESIDENT ELECT 2025-2026

LISA WEST



Lisa served as President of the AAUW Minnesota board from 2018-2020, having previously served as the Secretary/Historian on the board. She also served as secretary and president of the Hastings Branch. Lisa is a senior project manager in Dakota County, specializing in conservation easement and park land acquisitions. She has spent over 36 years in local government service. She has authored several strategic plans for county government and volunteered on city and county citizen committees. She's a member of the local Lion's Club, also serving her community. Her

career began with a B.S. in geography at UW-Eau Claire, where she also swam competitively. She was captain of the 1983 National Championship swim team and achieved All-American in swimming and academics. Lisa enjoys her involvement with AAUW and is committed to its mission. She looks forward to returning to a leadership role during a new term as President-Elect.

VICE PRESIDENT PROGRAM 2025-2027

KAREN REICHENSPERGER RN, Ph.D.



Karen has been involved with AAUW for over 50 years always committed to the mission of "equity for women and girls." This has driven her monetary contributions (as a Legacy member), her political activities, and her interactions with people in general. As a long-time member, she has been active in AAUW in Duluth (MN) , Laredo (TX) and San Antonio (TX). As president of Duluth (MN) she helped initiate STEM annual workshops that have since been adopted by the College of St.

Scholastica. As a College/University Rep in San Antonio & TX, she had contact with the various local & state C/U reps and encouraged them to outreach to their C/Us and to C/Us that had no AAUW contact. As a result, a number of the reps joined AAUW. Previously, she was the AAUW MN Historian having contact with many branches. Karen was a group supervisor with FEMA, always tuned into equity. As she was deployed to various states. she connected with local branches and attended meetings as a guest. Karen stated that it was motivating to see how women around the US are working for equity for women and girls as well as fostering fellowship with their members. As VP for Programs in MN, Karen will maintain contact with the Branch VPs for program, providing resources, listening to their concerns, and responding as able & appropriate.

VICE PRESIDENT Public Policy 2025-2027

No candidate has applied for this position.

TREASURER 2025-2027

BETH NIENOW BA, MA, ABD



By profession Beth was a reference librarian with over 30 years of work experience in academic and public libraries from North Dakota to Tennessee, most recently at the Rochester Public Library. She is currently an online bookseller and arts advocate living in Rochester. Her other volunteer, philanthropic, and arts-related activities include volunteering for the Rochester Public Library Foundation, Friends of the Rochester Public Library, and serving on the board of the Minnesota Association of Library

Friends. Rochester Music Guild, Choral Arts Ensemble, Rochester Friends of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, and the Plainview Area History Center. Around 1987, Beth decided she wanted to join a book group, and to do that, she had to join AAUW. She thought it would be an enjoyable way to broaden her reading habits and meet new friends. Little did she know that she would end up holding nearly every position on her local branch board, including two terms as president. Ironically, she had never been treasurer of anything before her nomination to the state board, initially in 2017. Since then, Beth stated that she has learned so much and looks forward to working with this wonderful organization for another term.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2025-2026 (for 2026 Elections)

MARY SCHWANKE B.S., M.A.



Mary joined AAUW in 2005 and is currently serving as the Owatonna branch president. She has also served as Program Co-chair, Membership Vice President, and Secretary for the Owatonna branch. Mary is a graduate of Minnesota State University, Mankato with a B.S. in Dental Hygiene and holds a M.A. in Organizational Management and Communications from Concordia University, St. Paul. Mary previously worked as a Dental Hygiene faculty member at Minnesota State University, Mankato and Rochester Community and Technical College. She is

currently working as a clinical dental hygienist in Owatonna and is an active volunteer in the Owatonna community with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the American Legion Auxiliary.

(At least two additional members from Branches are needed for the Nominating Committee. Two State Board Members will be appointed to the Committee in July.)

2024-2026 AAUW MN Public Policy Priorities

Biennial Action Priorities

To support a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, diversity and inclusivity, and to address the barriers and implicit biases that hinder the advancement of women and girls, AAUW advocates:

- Strengthening and vigorous enforcement of Title IX and all other civil rights laws pertaining to education;
- Adequate and equitable funding for and access to quality public education, including early childhood education, for all students;
- Opposition to the use of public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary education and to charter schools that do not adhere to the same civil rights and accountability standards as required of other public schools;
- Increased support for and protection of programs that meet the needs of girls and women in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, including strong promotion of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and comprehensive sexual health education;
- Increased support for and access to affordable higher education for women, including alleviating the debt burden that disproportionately impacts borrowers of color and exacerbates the racial wealth gap; and
- Support for practices that halt the flow of students from schools to prisons, including reforming school disciplinary practices that disproportionately punish girls and students of color.

To achieve economic security for all women, AAUW advocates:

- Pay equity and fairness in compensation and benefits;
- Equitable access and advancement in employment, free from systemic barriers and biases, including vigorous enforcement of employment discrimination statutes;
- Closing the gender and race gaps in leadership opportunities for women of all backgrounds;
- Greater availability of and access to a high standard of benefits and policies that promote work-life balance, including quality and affordable dependent care and paid family, medical, and sick leave;

- Programs that provide women with education, training, and support for success in the workforce, including nontraditional occupations and women’s entrepreneurship;
- Strengthening programs, including welfare and career and technical education, to improve postsecondary education access, career development, and earning potential;
- Strengthening retirement benefits and programs, including pension improvements and protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid from privatization;
- Access for all women to the full range of health care services to ensure economic security; and
- Increasing the number of quality jobs that pay a living wage.

To guarantee equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society, AAUW advocates:

- Vigorous enforcement of and full access to civil and constitutional rights, including affirmative action and expanding voting rights;
- Complete, accurate and timely collection of data, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender identity to inform policy decisions and the apportionment of political representation;
- Self-determination of one’s reproductive health decisions;
- Universal access to quality, affordable health care, including insurance, and comprehensive family planning services, including expansion of patients’ rights;
- Freedom from violence and fear of violence, including hate crimes, in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities;
- Support for U.N. programs that address human rights and women’s and girls’ concerns;
- Freedom in the definition of self and family, including protection from discrimination and a guarantee of civil rights for all family structures; and
- Passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Resolution #1

ERA IN MINNESOTA CONSTITUTION

WHEREAS the 2025-2027 National AAUW Public Policy Priorities advocates for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). AND

WHEREAS the Minnesota Constitution does not have an Equal Rights Amendment. AND

WHEREAS the lack of constitutional equality reaches every aspect of women's lives. The ERA would clarify, once and for all, that sex discrimination in employment and wages, reproductive rights, insurance, Social Security, education, and more is a violation of constitutional rights. Importantly, the ERA would also provide new opportunities to seek legal recourse when an individual faces sex discrimination and would place the burden of proof on those who discriminate instead of those fighting for equality. AND

WHEREAS Minnesota AAUW is one of the Allies of ERAMN.org.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AAUW Minnesota members vigorously support passing the ERA for the Minnesota Constitution.

IMPLEMENTATION: The AAUW Minnesota State Branches continue to encourage members to contact their Senators and Representatives to support passing the ERA.

Submitted by
Minneapolis Branch ;
Veronica Johnson, Public Policy Member
veronicajj@aol.com, 612-747-3108

Resolution #2

Whereas, federal funding is at risk for many programs supporting AAUW's policy agenda to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy

Whereas, administrators, teachers, parents and students are primary stakeholders and must be included in formulating any strategies that address educational funding deficits.

Whereas, while AAUW policies are focused on the needs of girls and women, the current funding cuts to education will hurt all students and AAUW must be inclusive in any actions that are taken to address educational funding.

Therefore, it is critical that AAUW works with state and local governments to identify and address funding gaps that threaten to interrupt or reverse progress made in support of AAUW's policy agenda.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The AAUW Minnesota branches are encouraged to:

- Identify funding gaps using data from trusted government and other institutional sources.
- Prioritize critical needs at the state and local levels as they pertain to AAUW strategic goals
- Collaborate with local government officials, elected officials, and community partners to identify actions that may be taken at the local level by individual branches to address critical needs.

Submitted by Red Wing Area Branch

Carol Bauer, Red Wing Area Branch

caroljbauer@gmail.com

651-295-3277

Resolution #3

WHEREAS AAUW advocates for equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society and for freedom from violence and fear of violence, including hate crimes in homes, schools, workplaces and communities and;

WHEREAS AAUW advocates for freedom in the definition of self and family including protection from discrimination and a guarantee of civil rights for all family structures and

WHEREAS it has been established that only male and female genders will be recognized in the United States and

WHEREAS all Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) activities and support are currently halted in the federal government and strongly discouraged in the private sector and

WHEREAS LGBTQIA+ individuals of all ages indicate they feel threatened and unsafe in the current political environment

THEREFORE be it resolved that AAUW branches in Minnesota will work toward fostering a sense of safety and support for LGBTQIA+ residents and visitors in their communities.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Ely Branch Public Policy committee will provide a packet of resource information to each of the branches.

Branches are encouraged to select and implement from the following activities:

- Gather and share a list of existing services and organizations that provide support and programming for LGBTQIA+ in their community and determine if there are ways they can partner with those organizations to strengthen support.
- Provide education to the membership about gender issues through a gender justice reading and discussion group or by sponsoring speakers on the topic.
- Host a party to create diversity affirming posters to display in member windows.
- Host a learning session to help members learn to use the requested pronouns, how to apologize appropriately when mistakes are made and to encourage all members to include pronouns in their signature lines to make it more comfortable for others to do so as well.
- Encourage members to post gender diverse support service contact information on their social media as well as brainstorm ways to make the information readily available to vulnerable populations.
- Gather and share information so that branch members can learn how to challenge prejudicial and erroneous statements about gender.
- Host a learning session so branch members will educate themselves on how to be an effective ally to LGBTQIA+ residents.
- Additional support/inclusion activities as deemed appropriate by the branch agency.

Submitted by Ely Branch

Kay Vandervort khv771@gmail.com 218.235.6102

AAUW MN VP Membership Report
2024-2025
Submitted by Pat Powers

What is the best perk when trying to attract members? *Shape the Future* offers free National Dues upon joining at an event hosted by your Branch. It is a great perk to offer a possible member who is interested in joining AAUW. Oh yes, but you have to find those possible members. You have to be out there and be visible. There is that little elevator speech on the tip of your tongue when you meet someone you think would be a good member. "I belong to AAUW. Do you know about AAUW? It's a great organization with an emphasis on the education of women and girls. Our branch meets monthly. We have speakers who align with our mission. We have a book club. We plan activities. We raise funds and sponsor scholarships. We have a national presence and advocate for women's issues in Washington DC. We support the Get Out the Vote initiative and fight for gender equity and inclusion and the economic security of women. We educate women on how to negotiate for the salaries they deserve in our online classes. We are a community of active, intelligent, and supportive women (and men). We cultivate friendships that last a lifetime."

Ah yes, visibility, it is the brochures at the library or City Hall, the articles for the local paper, the occasional radio interview, the fundraiser where you invite the public, and your presence on social media. We collaborate with like organizations. Visibility takes all shapes and forms. Your Branch must find its own way.

AAUW is a fabulous organization. Getting new members and having growth in your Branch is a continuous process. The trend for organizations is generally loss of membership in recent years. Women are busy. Women who join want to contribute to a mission they believe in. We must show where our mission leads. We also must have some fun. In all the planned activities make sure some of them are fun.

MEMBERSHIP RECORDS FEBRUARY 1, 2025

BRANCH	Lifetime & Honorary Life Members	National Branch Members and Student Associate & Grad Student Members	Total 2024	Total 2025	Percent of Change %
Albert Lea	-	-	14	-	-
Alexandria Area	1	14	14	15	7.1
Austin	2	62	67	64	-4.5
Brainerd	3	37	37	40	8.1
Duluth	11	68	76	79	3.9
Ely	6	62	73	68	-6.8
Faribault	10	33	46	43	-6.5
Fergus Falls	2	40	46	42	-8.6
Grand Rapids	7	73	83	80	-3.6
Hastings	6	100	102	106	3.7
Hibbing	4	54	64	58	-9.3
Metro West	-	-	20	-	-
Minneapolis	32	214	235	246	4.6
Northfield	7	12	25	19	-24.0
Owatonna	4	42	42	46	10.4
Red Wing Area	1	52	48	53	9.0
Rochester	25	72	105	97	-7.6
Saint Cloud Area	10	77	106	87	-17.9
Saint Croix Valley	6	22	32	28	-12.5
Saint Paul	26	260	312	286	-9.9
Thief River Falls	0	2	2	2	0
Virginia Area	1	20	20	21	5.0
Willmar	6	24	32	30	-6.2
Winona	3	18	23	21	-9.5
National/State Members			2	1	
At Large Honorary Life Members	3		3		
TOTALS	176	1358	1629	1535	-5.8

Branches with membership increases (based upon February 1, 2025 membership count)

Minneapolis	11	Brainerd Area	3
Red Wing Area	5	Duluth	3
Hastings	4	Virginia Area	1
Owatonna	4		

AAUW MN Vice President of Program Report Submitted by Karen Kirkwood, VP Program

Thank you to everyone who has made this year go smoothly after my appointment to this position, especially all the help from Teresa Sagen!

Following is the AAUW MN 2025 *Helping Our Branches* Report with information about the Strategic Plan Action Grants, NCCWSL Grants awarded to branches for 2025 and the Young Women for Equity Award. Thanks to branches who applied for these grants. We look forward to hearing more about the implementation of your grants and the experiences of the students you are sponsoring for NCCWSL 2025.

Branch Highlights are included in the annual meeting booklet. Be sure to read them for their great ideas! Thanks to all branches that submitted their highlights.

AAUW MN 2025 *Helping Our Branches* Report

For 2025, the AAUW MN Board approved the following grants and awards:

- Three \$500 Strategic Action Plan Grants that focus on one or more Goal Areas in AAUW MN's Strategic Action Plan and to help Minnesota branches achieve AAUW's mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. Grants were awarded to Brainerd, Minneapolis and Red Wing Area branches.
- Up to 10 \$1000 NCCWSL (National Conference for College Women Student Leaders) Grants are available to assist branches to sponsor a student for 2025 NCCWSL at the University of Maryland.
- Young Women for Equity Awards – High School and College. These awards are based on a project or activity specifically addressing women's and girls' equity issues, reflecting AAUW's mission. If any applications are received by the March 31 deadline, they will be reviewed and announced at the State Meeting.

2025 Strategic Plan Action Grants were awarded to...

1. AAUW Brainerd Area - \$500

The Brainerd Lakes Area branch is working to understand the financial education needs of the Central Lakes College students. We will use a needs assessment process to determine how to best reach students with the AAUW Start Smart educational tool. Adaptations to the AAUW Start Smart program will be made as determined to be appropriate to the program delivery. After the educational program has been conducted, the student participants will be involved in giving feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of the Start Smart trainings.

2. AAUW Minneapolis - \$500

This is a multi-branch project including Minneapolis and St. Paul branches and hopefully additional AAUW branches. AAUW Minneapolis plans to collaborate with other women's organizations in the Twin Cities and Minnesota to show the documentary film *Zurawski v Texas*. One important goal is to approach other organizations and invite them to collaborate in support of this event. The project will help develop participating members' leadership skills, specifically in working with nonprofits in the coalition. The main goal of showing this film aligns with AAUW and AAUW Minnesota positions on freedom of choice in reproductive healthcare, which is being threatened. With an overall AAUW mission of working for equity for women and girls, this event focuses on both bringing women from truly diverse backgrounds together to work for a common goal and educates the audience on what happens when women's rights are not protected.

3. AAUW Red Wing Area - \$500

The AAUW Red Wing Area Branch will accomplish the fourth year of their successful Red Wing Public School initiative. The goal for this year is to have a positive impact on reading for their 3rd graders in Red Wing Public School District as they prepare to take the (MCA) MN Comprehensive Assessment by supporting a fun and creative learning opportunity. They remain committed to supporting their public school district by sharing community resources. The success of last year's project for 3rd graders inspired them to maintain a focus on literacy. They state that they "are building a foundation that we hope to continue as we support our public schools for years to come."

2025 NCCWSL \$1000 Grants

Initially, eight Branches contacted AAUW MN stating their intention of sponsoring a student for NCCWSL: As of 4-10-25, the following branches have submitted the required student registrations and received their awards of \$1000 each: Ely, Minneapolis, Red Wing Area, St. Paul.

2025 Young Women for Equity Awards

We received one nomination from Barb Knutson, President of the Rochester Branch. Following is the recipient of this year's Young Women of Equity Award – College, Kathleen Thompson.



Kathleen Thompson is from Rochester, MN and a junior in the UND Honors program, double majoring in Commercial Aviation and Aviation Safety. She is a commercial pilot, team member and Vice President of the UND Aerobatic Team.

She is an accomplished pianist and organist, winning at both recent UND and Fargo Piano Concerto competitions. Kathleen serves as staff organist at United Lutheran in Grand Forks.

She is a part of the United Aviate pathway program and plans to fly for United Airlines, assist in humanitarian flight projects with her seaplane

rating, and contribute to the inspiration of many young girls, in hopes that they may one day choose to pursue the wonderful field of aviation.

Kathleen received the Award for her participation and leadership in *Girls in Aviation Day* Sept 21, 2024. Following is part of Kathleen's application and description in her own words:

"This is an international event, promoted by Women in Aviation International (WAI). It occurs on the same date throughout the world since 2015. It is up to each local chapter to organize their event. And I was one of those little MN girls who attended this event in St Paul in 2015 and 2019 where among other activities, I met a female black hawk pilot and sat in her helicopter. So, I was delighted when the opportunity came to lead and pay it forward in 2024 with the University of North Dakota -Grand Forks WAI chapter of which I am a student member. Growing up in a non-aviator family, if it was not for an event like this to open my eyes, to dream and meet other women in the profession, I would not be where I am today.

Goals of Day: Empower young girls to pursue aerospace related careers despite being underrepresented in the industry. (This aligns well with AAUW mission statement)

AAUW mission statement: advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research."

Participants included approximately 200 girls ages K-12

Location: Fargo Air Museum, Fargo ND

Supporting Rationale for this project: "Women are extremely underrepresented in all aviation careers. This includes pilots, air traffic controllers, meteorology, aerospace engineering, unmanned aircraft (drones), space studies, astronauts, avionics, aerospace management, cybersecurity, aviation safety, accident investigation and aerospace medicine.

In 2022, the number of women airline captains was 3.6% and it hasn't changed in 20 years.

In 2023, of all aviation related careers, women make up < 20% of the workforce.

And, women airplane mechanics are in the single digits. Why are women such a minority? It is challenging to envision yourself as a woman pilot or air traffic controller when you haven't seen anyone who looks like you. So you feel like you don't belong. Also, sexes are separated by stereotypical roles. There is a perceived lack of technical knowledge by women.

Duties: Since I was one of the UND upperclassman aviation students participating and had attended this event in the past, I was able to take the lead, welcoming participants, directing my classmates and keeping the day flowing smoothly. (A total of ten UND women aviation students volunteered at the event.) For the youngest girls we had stickers, coloring pages/booklets, small aerospace themed toys and bracelet making at a large table. For middle school through high school we had print materials to take home about various aerospace careers and visited with them, and their parents, one on one, so they would feel a sense of belonging, a spark of curiosity, and meet positive, enthusiastic, woman role models. Regardless of their age, it was fun to personally show them the unique cloud seeding plane brought in for the day from the Fargo Jet Service plus other multiple planes, many from WWII and other items in the museum. Plus they were able to enjoy the beautiful ambiance of the air museum surrounded by other girls. Other aviation vendors present included: Air Force, Fargo Jet Service, UND NASA Space Consortium.

It is unknown how many of these young girls in attendance will actually pursue aviation careers. Our goals were that simply meeting positive role models in our non-traditional women's careers with hands-on activities might cause them to dream farther than they or their parents had ever imagined."

AAUW MN VP Public Policy Report Submitted by Jan Carey

The AAUW MN State meeting is before us. The Resolutions Committee encouraged branch members to submit Resolutions for the State Meeting. It is our policy tradition to write and pass resolutions because it is a formal document that makes a statement about an issue or honors someone or group that is so important that AAUW MN wants to have a record of it. A resolution strengthens public policy priorities as well.

That said, it is now time to examine **the state of our Mission.**

The fire alarms are blaring quite loudly. It's time to come to the aid of all Americans and put out the fires or at least control them. I recently used this analogy in a Public Policy update to branch leaders and it was published in *The Pine*. Using the procedures applied by forest fighters, each and every one of us can develop local advocacy initiatives, events, and conduct two-minute activist initiatives.

First of all, select an Executive Order and use the firefighter's strategy.

1. Suppress the fire - reset your personal FB settings, notifications, ads, etc. Read what you want to read; not what an algorithm has designed for you.
2. Establish control lines - the boundaries that must be employed to control how and where the issue will spread. Repeat #1.
3. Flank - Firefighters begin their assault on the blaze from behind. Thus, attend city or county council meetings and school board meetings. Know their agendas. Know our Public Policy Priorities. Is there anything on the agenda that threatens an AAUW public policy priority? Understand the issues - individual or group research of the issues; learn both sides; act accordingly.
4. Prevent the fire - Know the issues and report them to members frequently and with commitment. Be prepared to mitigate issues through the media, at speaking engagements, on social media platforms, in letters to the editor of newspapers and in letters to legislative leaders.

The strength of advocacy

My monthly SPPC (State Public Policy Committee) meetings with AAUW National staff are highly informative. Updates from National have been constant to the daily actions in Washington DC. Meghan Kissell, Senior Director of Policy and Member Advocacy, provides updates which I post to branch public policy leaders. Most recently, AAUW has taken strong action to the elimination of the Department of Education. AAUW CEO Gloria L. Blackwell has issued the following statement:

The President knows he cannot unilaterally dismantle the U.S. Department of Education through executive order; however, this reckless action is part of a deeply troubling agenda to dismantle public education through cuts and chaos. By slashing funding, stripping oversight, and creating disorder, this administration is deliberately undermining students' ability to access and complete higher education. The consequences will be devastating — especially for low-income students, first-generation college-goers, and communities historically marginalized in education.

Furthermore, AAUW National is releasing two-minute activists as quickly as possible. The most recent is following:

Tell Congress to Oppose Attacks on Higher Education

Threats to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education and cut funding for critical programs—such as the Department’s Office for Civil Rights, campus-based childcare and financial assistance for low-income students—jeopardize our students’ futures. Congress must stand with students and protect the Department’s fundamental promise of equal opportunity in education.

Urge your members of Congress to oppose all efforts to dismantle and cut funding to the Department of Education.

AAUW calls on Congress to reject this cynical attack on the U.S. Department of Education and to uphold its essential mission: ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has access to a high-quality education.

This is not just an attack on an agency — it is an attack on our students, our economy, and the fundamental promise of equal opportunity. AAUW will not stand idly by as education is placed on the chopping block. We urge students, parents, educators, and advocates across the country to make their voices heard and demand that Congress protect the future of education in America. [aauw.quorum.us]

YES, but.

In many respects we are lucky to live in the progressive state of MN. But things could change during this legislative session and in the next election cycle. Gov. Walz reacted quickly to the executive order highlighting Title IX. [his statement, paraphrased]

Transgender inclusion in sports is protected by the Minnesota Human Rights Act, and no executive order can override that. Federal law cannot be rewritten with executive orders, and Title IX cannot be erased with the stroke of a pen. The executive order is illegal and will be met with lawsuits and injunctions. This executive order isn’t about protecting women’s sports—it’s about trying to erase trans people from public life. Trans people have always been part of the human experience. No executive order can erase that. No attack can strip away trans people’s dignity, humanity, or right to belong.

I implore branch public policy leaders to inform and organize members to advocate and put out or suppress those fires, now!

AAUW FUNDS

2024 Branch Contributions

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Total Gift</u>
Albert Lea	\$ 54.25
Alexandria Area	105.00
Austin	228.00
Brainerd Lakes	1,012.30
Duluth	270.00
Ely	2,250.74
Faribault	3,434.00
Fergus Falls	1,147.00
Grand Rapids	2,676.39
Hastings	3,246.41
Hibbing	3,750.00
Mankato	150.00
Minneapolis	12,065.10
Moorhead	5,000.00
Northfield	958.00
Owatonna	2,313.21
Red Wing Area	1,353.38
Rochester	31,541.27
St Cloud	1,605.00
St Croix Valley	270.00
St Paul	7,502.12
Thief River Falls	10.00
Willmar	190.50
Winona	324.23
Minnesota	<u>400.00</u>

Total contribution from Minnesota:
\$ 81,856.90

<u>Top Ten: Total Contribution</u>	
<u>Branch</u>	<u>Total Gift</u>
Rochester	\$31,541.27
Minneapolis	12,065.10
St. Paul	7,502.12
Moorhead	5,000.00
Hibbing	3,750.00
Faribault	3,434.00
Hastings	3,246.41
Grand Rapids	2,676.39
Owatonna	2,313.21
Ely	2,250.74

<u>Top Ten: Per Capita Contribution</u>	
<u>Branch</u>	<u>Per Capita Gift</u>
Rochester	\$ 325.17
Faribault	79.86
Hibbing	64.66
Northfield	50.42
Owatonna	50.29
Minneapolis	49.05
Grand Rapids	33.45
Ely	33.10
Hastings	30.63
Fergus Falls	26.67

AAUW Funds

Named Gift Honorees for 2024

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Honored</u>
Brainerd Lakes	Luann Rice
Ely	Kay Vandervort, Mary Setterholm
Faribault	Carmen Tripp, Pat Umbreit, Barb Dubbels, JoEllen Schulz
Fergus Falls	In tribute to Fergus Falls Branch Members
Grand Rapids	Jan Mary Hill, Nancy Raymond
Hastings	Patricia Schultz, Ann Skoglund, Barbara Moen, Carol Hirshey
Hibbing	Bette Jo Greaton
Minneapolis	Victor Barela, Nan Beman, Rita Britton, Rae Cornelius, Mollie Keys, Laura King, Kerry Noyes, Mary K. Roberts, Judy Romlin, Karen Swigart, Judy Vermeland-Wendt, Nell Wegmann
Northfield	Carol James - In memory of her longtime branch leadership
Owatonna	Mary Schwanke
Red Wing Area	Cyndi Traun
Rochester	Lucy Bahn, Nancy Brubaker, Bani Mahadeva, Marilyn Morem, Beth Nienow, Josephine (Jo) Trachy, Long time AAUW mission supporters
St. Paul	Jan Barker, Leslie Ferry, Diane Pike, Carol Hanson, Leslie Sworsky, JoAnne Tomczak, Jan Parkman, Lois Hollingsworth, Sue Greimel, Kathy Mallarky

*For every \$750 that a branch contributes to AAUW Funds,
the branch may recognize a Named Gift Honoree.*



MINNESOTA

The AAUW Board of Directors sincerely thanks our Legacy Circle Members for their generosity and lasting commitment to our mission. Your unwavering support and vision inspire us, and we are deeply grateful for your dedication.

ANONYMOUS

LUCILLE BARNES-DIESSLIN

IVY CELENDER

KAREN CHRISTENSON

YVONNE CONDELL

SUSAN GROVE

CATHERINE HASLAG

VERONICA JOHNSON

MARILYN KAEI

KAREN KIRKWOOD

MARY LILLQUIST

BARBARA LINK

BANI MAHADEVA

ELIZABETH MAHAN

EILEEN NEWHOUSE

BETH NIENOW

ALTA OBEN

RENÉ PERRANCE

JAIME PRICE

KAREN REICHENSBERGER

PATRICIA RICE

COLLEEN ROLLING

ROBERT ROSENBROOK

TERESA SAGEN

THOMAS SHAW

NANCY SOMMER

BARBARA WONSON-LIUKKONEN



Secretary/Historian, Pine Editor and Bylaws Chair Annual Report 2024 – 2025

Submitted by Sandra Martell

I prepared and distributed Minutes of Board Meetings of July 20, 2024, October 19, 2024, January 18, 2025, and February 1, 2025 and added these documents to the AAUW MN electronic and hard copy records.

I edited the Summer and Fall 2024 and the Winter 2025 issues of *The Pine*.

I reminded branches to submit copies of their revised bylaws and reviewed bylaws submitted by several branches. I began reviewing AAUW MN Standing Rules to make recommendations to the Board for changes. I reviewed the State Meeting Standing Rules and advised the Administrative Assistant that no changes need to be made other than the meeting date.

AAUW MN Administrative Assistant Report 2024-2025

Submitted by Teresa Sagen

During the 2024-2025 year, I supported the AAUW MN Board and Branches by

- Arranging meeting venues for in-person state board meetings and scheduling Zoom meetings for State Board Meeting and State President's meetings with Branch Presidents/Contacts;
- Updating and compiling the 2024-2025 AAUW MN State Directory;
- Compiling the 2025 Helping Our Branches Booklet;
- Collecting NCCWSL Grants, Strategic Action Plan Grants, and Young Women for Equity Awards and completing Requests for Payments as needed;
- Compiling the AAUW MN 2025 State Meeting Booklet;
- Serving as Chair of the Credentials Committee and assisting branches to identify the appropriate number of delegates for the State Meeting based upon February 1 Membership numbers; and
- Sending emails to all AAUW MN members with links to *The Pine* and other communications.

AAUW MN Branch Highlights

2024-2025

AAUW Austin

We kicked off the new program year with a “Barbie Evening.” We met at a local coffee house for a social gathering featuring pink-iced cookies and lemonade before walking together to the local theater to watch the Barbie movie. Attendees were encouraged to wear pink. We also held a Barbie Trivia game with great prizes. It was a fun way to begin the year.

In September, we hosted candidate forums for local races, making us the only group in town to provide this critical public service. The forums were well attended, and we welcomed new members to our organization.

Our program topics included artificial intelligence, women’s health, teens and anxiety, and a presentation on the Equal Rights Amendment in Minnesota by Susann Willhite, which was open to the public.

We also hosted another Story Show, which has become a tradition in Austin. This event raised almost \$5,000 for local scholarships.

In addition to these wonderful programs, we offer two book groups, a travel group, and a Great Decisions group.

We are also hosting the AAUW State Meeting!

AAUW Brainerd Lakes Area

The Brainerd Lakes Area AAUW branch continued its strategic focus on economic security for women with a program open to the public called “Equal Pay for Men and Women” on Sept. 7, 2024. AAUW Minnesota President Kelsey Waits presented information on gender pay equity based on research by the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota and the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

Economic security was also the focus of several fall branch meetings, including a tour of the Lakes Area Food Shelf in Pequot Lakes in September with members donating money and food, and a program on Women Caregivers—Health and Economics.

Our book discussions included “The Extraordinary Story of the Founding Mothers on NPR”, “Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America”, “Everything You Wanted to Know about Indians But Were Afraid to Ask”, and “Killers of the Flower Moon”. One book, “The Women They Could Not Silence”, about women in the 1800s being committed without just cause to insane asylums by their husbands provoked a rousing discussion about how unfair treatment of women has continued until fairly recently with members sharing personal examples from banking, workplace and other relationships.

We held our 17th annual Brain Buster Trivia Event on January 18, 2025. With 24 teams participating and lots of creative costumes and team names (Mad Hatters, Smarty Plants, Loon Rangers), we raised nearly \$4,000 for local scholarships.

AAUW Ely

In the past year, the Ely Branch was able to grant almost \$9,000 to women and girls for scholarships to two non-traditional students to attend MN North College, a MN North College student to attend NCCSWL, three Ely fifth-grade girls to attend a four-day STEM Camp in Duluth, and two Ely high school girls to attend Northwoods Young Writers Camp. We are on track to grant a similar amount later this spring and summer.

As part of our Human Trafficking & Exploitation Awareness initiative, we distributed/placed human/sex trafficking posters in public restrooms of Ely area gas stations, bars, restaurants, and other businesses to provide information and offer access to help for those that seek it. In conjunction with this educational series, we held a poetry reading and book release of the “Shame Wrangler” by Elizabeth Gade, a human trafficking survivor. Elizabeth shared her writing focusing on issues faced by victims of human trafficking as a way to connect with fellow survivors.

In September, we organized two well-attended candidate forums at the community college auditorium - one for MN House District 3a and the second for Ely City Council candidates. Both forums were also available on Ely TV and YouTube. A voter registration drive was also held in September at Minnesota North College in collaboration with Ely EMPOWER.

In October, our branch hosted five other northern Minnesota AAUW branches for the Annual Northland Get Together. The theme for this five-hour event focused on building advocacy in our communities.

In March, the branch hosted a lunch for about 110 kids, mostly of Native American heritage, attending Indigenous Students Day at the Ely Film Festival where the kids watched impactful films about Indigenous culture and experiences. Branch members had fun serving the kids with the cost covered by AAUW Ely and Ely EMPOWER (a local advocacy group for women in the Ely community).

During the last year, our branch held three successful (and fun!) silent auctions and bucket raffles to raise funds for our scholarships and programs. And later this year, our branch will celebrate our 100th anniversary!

AAUW Faribault

Our Branch celebrated our 100th year as an AAUW Branch. We had a skit presented by several members at our December meeting and they created a list of 100 things that we were influential in getting started in our community. Along with the celebration that we enjoyed, we are devoting our Women in History Month newspaper articles to the things we have done and continue to do in our community.

Another milestone was reached by our members who have been meeting monthly for book club for 25 years.

We were able to grant scholarships to young women. This is mainly due to the money raised at our Halloween breakfast.

Our monthly meetings also included a session on writing legacy letters, a presentation by a gentleman from Trystar company about energy and how women have gained higher positions in his field and we celebrated a member's 100th birthday. We held 2 candidate forums before the election, and we met with our first woman city administrator. Upcoming programs include a presentation by our local Librarian and poetry readings by a local poet.

AAUW Fergus Falls

In January, the Fergus Falls branch was excited to receive recognition from AAUW National by being awarded the Communications and External Relations Star in AAUW's Five Star Program. Some of our branch activities are highlighted below:

In September, our branch hosted a forum for the nine candidates running for the three positions on our district school board, with only one incumbent candidate. Held on the campus of MN State, the large crowd showed interest in learning about all of the candidates and their important role.

Also in September, we hosted a STEAM event, in collaboration with our county Historical Museum. Through a grant, Branch member Missy Hermes, the museum's educator, had received a kit with activities to explore several space adventures geared to girls in grades 5-8. The activities were facilitated by several AAUW members, who learned alongside the girls!

In October, 12 members participated in an annual weekend "Cultural Trip", exploring southwest Minnesota, from Granite Falls and Redwood Falls to Luverne and Pipestone. The weekend included arts, history, culture, and entertainment along with camaraderie among the members of the group.

A popular benefit of branch membership is our book discussion group, which meets four times during the year. This year's books featured Celebrated Women Writers - authors who have received multiple literary awards. The books selected include: *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison; *We Were the Mulvaney's* by Joyce Carol Oates; *An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960's*, by Doris Kearns Goodwin; *The Good Earth*, by Pearl S. Buck.

A long-standing program to award local scholarships to area girls/women continues, with funds from a biannual Tour of Homes. Preparations are underway for the 2025 Tour in November.

Excellent monthly programs, summer activities, other projects, and fellowship continue to keep our members engaged and committed to the mission of AAUW.

AAUW Grand Rapids

The AAUW Grand Rapids Branch was formed 75 years ago to demonstrate commitment to education and equality for women and girls. Each month before the business meeting, our group does an activity called Travel Treasures. This started 10 years ago. A lot of our members travel, and while on these adventures people gather small items to share. You pay one dollar for each chance, and whoever has their name drawn takes home the item. The money raised goes toward the Scholarship Fund.

Our January meeting brought us a member who had done a walking tour of "The Portuguese Camino and The West Highland Way". The slide presentation gave us a visual of the landscape, and

all the historic things she saw. In February and March, we had speakers available in the area such as Project Care for free clinic and Itasca Life Options: The Gift of Inclusion, Why every moment matters. In May we have a banquet to celebrate the year of AAUW. During this time the scholarship awards are announced, and the recipients share their field of study. In December we have a Holiday Dinner with light entertainment and possibly one of the scholarship recipients speaking.

During the summer months we have a Book Club Group, a Walking and Talking Group, and an Exploring our Community Group. August brings us the annual Potluck. A member graciously opens her home for a view of her gardens. We have Travel Treasures, maybe some wine and delicious food.

AAUW works with the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation for scholarships for non-traditional students. There is also a \$4000 scholarship for a student in a business field. We also sponsor a scholarship through Minnesota North. This scholarship supports the advancement of gender equality for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

AAUW Hastings

The Hastings Branch is having an energetic and exciting year! We continue growing with our membership, 109 members...so far. We have made an intentional effort to engage branch members, old and new, by drawing half our members into active roles in Branch teams: fundraising, technology, DEI, Scholarship, and communication.

This engagement of our members has promoted a reinvigoration of our Gad-Abouts events with trips that include Black Nativity, Girlhood at the MN History Center, and local coffee concerts. In addition, we have developed a DEI component in our newsletter and at every program meeting. Before the business meetings, members are led in a thought-provoking DEI activity allowing them to interact respectfully. Our Technology team has refreshed our branch website and initiated a Facebook page linked to Instagram. Our membership and treasurer teams are working closely together to expedite membership enrollment and data management. Working together with Hastings Public Schools and Hastings Chamber of Commerce, we are engaged with Future Workforce Development team supporting Hastings High School students moving into the workforce.

Our branch had a very successful fundraising program this year, hosting a used book sale as a participant in our community's summer festival, and the fourth annual Wine Soiree' (tasting) open to the public. This success allowed us to add a second college scholarship awarded to a female high school student, plus maintain two scholarships for female high school students entering non-traditional fields through vocational education. In addition, we anticipate supporting a scholarship for NCCWSL. Finally, we continue support for the Hastings Reads Program; a longstanding community reading one-book to share ideas and encourage and support reading.

The future is bright for the Hastings Branch as we listen, react and plan for new ideas to support women in all areas of life. Let's make this the Year of Women Empowerment!

AAUW Minneapolis

The Minneapolis continues to have a very successful year:

- Welcoming 34 new members
- Organizing a very successful Gala fundraiser last fall
- Welcoming Metro West AAUW members
- Large attendance at the ERA rally in January
- Preparing a video of the Branch for Marketing, Membership, and Development Committee's use
- Achieving a star under the AAUW's Y24 Five Star Program for Communication
- Plans underway for public showing of *Zuvarski vs Texas* movie regarding reproductive rights

So proud of our members and all their efforts.

AAUW Owatonna

The Owatonna branch kicks off every fall with our annual fundraiser, **The Taste of Steele County**. We have twelve generous restaurants who donate their food and their time to serve samples for up to 300 community members. The proceeds go to fund scholarships and camperships for women and girls from Steele County. It also provides funds to send young women to the NCCWLS conference.

The Owatonna branch loves to read! We have two active book groups. Members may attend either or both groups. We have enjoyed several selections including *Master Slave Husband Wife* by Ilyon Woo, *Clear* by Carys Davies, and *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon.

The Owatonna branch members have enjoyed many wonderful programs this fall, winter and spring. In August, our program was titled Election Security and Integrity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence. We learned about what our county and state election officials do to protect the integrity of elections and ensure that nothing interferes with the right of voters to vote freely. In October, our annual Mystery Tour took us to Hockata Ti, a public exhibit and cultural center owned by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community. We were given a private tour of the exhibits by a knowledgeable guide. The timing was perfect because it was the Saturday before Indigenous Peoples' Day. In January, we heard via Zoom from a MN GreenCorp Intern at the National Loon Center and Fresh Water Research and Educational Center in Cross Lake, MN. Their mission includes restoring and protecting loon breeding habitats and responsible recreation.

Have you ever heard of the Matilda Effect? It's the historical bias against acknowledging the contributions and discoveries of women scientists. Speaker Eileen Newhouse shared some examples of women's important contributions to science and the belated efforts to give them their rightful place. It was a wonderful way to celebrate Women's History Month.

Please visit our website at owatonna-mn.aauw.net

AAUW Red Wing Area

We are proud of the programming we were able to complete this year. Each event was open to the public and enabled the branch to expand membership and keep our members engaged with the mission of AAUW.

The Lanesboro Alive! Theater group directed by Jane Peck, presented “Time for Women” at the Artist Sanctuary in August. We received a grant from a local organization, The Phillip S. Duff Foundation to help with the costs of this production. An ice-cream/pie social was included with the admission price. Two performances kept our members busy.

Late summer and fall were filled with collaborative events with the local League of Women Voters for candidate forums and voter registration events.

Other programs included:

1. MN College SE President Marsha A Danielson
2. Power of 100 leaders – Women giving \$100 each to fund community needs
3. Red Wing School District Superintendent – Bob Jaszczak
4. Annual Holiday Brunch Fundraiser
5. Annette Drewes – Her story with wild rice!
6. Women’s History Event – Local Community Activist in history – Jean Chesley
7. A Cultural Adventure to the MN Marine Museum in Winona & the National Eagle Ctr

In April we are proud to give a handcrafted book bag to all third graders in the Red School District. We received a grant from AAUWMN to complete this project. Third grade is the first year of the MN MCA reading test. This fun bag contains a book, a practice test sheet, pencil, fidget toy, parent letter and library application. The teachers give the bags to the students the week before the test saying the community cares about you as you take the test - do your best!

AAUW Rochester

Last year Rochester AAUW members donated enough money to be able to endow and award a scholarship to an incoming freshman to the University of MN, Rochester, this spring.

Long-time Rochester member Marilyn Stewart was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Minnesota. The formal citation from the Board of Regents noted her lifelong commitment to public service; acknowledged that she broke several glass ceilings in multiple public service organizations; advocated a new campus of the University of Minnesota in Rochester and paved the way for the education of hundreds of new health care professionals.

Rochester has a college student candidate for the Young Women for Equity Award again this year and hopes to send another student leader to NCCWSL this spring.

September Our speaker told of Mayo Clinic’s Bold, Forward, Unbound initiative in Rochester. This program reimagines Mayo’s downtown Rochester campus and introduces new facilities with innovative concepts and digital technologies that will advance Mayo’s strategy to cure, connect, and transform healthcare for the benefit of patients everywhere.

October Rochester school superintendent spoke about the Rochester School Referendum that was on the ballot in the fall. Under consideration was a proposal to increase the school operating levy per pupil

annually to raise revenue for ten years to help protect staffing levels, class sizes, and student programs and services.

November Our speaker came to the United States from Kenya to go to college and earn her Ph.D. in immunology at Mayo Clinic Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences in May 2024. She is doing post-doctoral research in Cancer Immunology and Immunotherapy Program. She has mentored and supported Kenyan high school students and she has helped Rochester students as a STEM mentor.

February Three representatives from NAWIC (National Association of Women in Construction) SE Minnesota introduced us to their personal roles in the construction world. From a variety of education choices, they climbed the “construction ladder.”

March Kim Norton, Mayor of Rochester spoke about the Statues for Equality, a global movement on a mission to balance the gender and racial representation in public art one statue at a time. By creating everlasting bronze statues of some of the most inspirational women of our time, Statues For Equality honors women’s contributions to society and spreads their inspiration to the world.

April A social worker who is a lifelong advocate and volunteer helping those who suffer from bullying, injustice, homelessness, family medical problems, mental illness, chemical dependency, and other issues. She was a determined campaigner for the paid family and medical leave bill that passed in the MN legislature in 2023.

May An attorney and rural advocate will speak about how American livestock farming has been wrested from small family farmers and transformed into today’s corporate control of meat production and pricing.

AAUW St. Croix Valley

The St. Croix Valley Branch has enjoyed an active year with a highlight of meeting our most recent scholarship recipient. We award yearly a scholarship yearly to a young woman completing her work at Century College and going on to a four-year institution. Our recipient is currently studying at the University of St. Thomas with plans to attend law school. She joined us at our December Holiday Luncheon.

Our programs, along with our interest groups, educate us in the areas of equity, inclusion, and empowerment. We have enjoyed presentations by Lori Sturdevant who co-authored a book with Joan Growe, a lawyer sharing tips on estate planning, and Kelsey Waits. Upcoming programs include a talk by Century College’s Foundation Executive Director and a visit to the Minnesota History Center to see the exhibit, “Girls (It’s Complicated)”. Our book, theater, movie and gourmet groups meet each fall to suggest and schedule themes, books, movies, and plays. They have met monthly or bimonthly to share, view, and discuss among other works, Democracy Awakening, “Behind the Sun,” and “Certain Woman.” Our year concludes with our annual potluck and election in May.

AAUW St. Paul

The St. Paul Branch welcomed President Kelsey Waits as the first speaker of the 2025 calendar year. Attendees included Becky Farber, AAUW Minneapolis Branch President; Dorothy Sandahl, AAUW Hastings Branch President; and Laurie Andrews, AAUW Red Wing Branch President. The event presented an opportunity to connect and collaborate with other Minnesota AAUW branches.

Throughout the year, several outreach initiatives were completed, including funding support for Emma Norton, which provides housing and growth opportunities for women and families in recovery; Women's Advocates, a shelter for victims of domestic violence; and the St. Paul Public Schools' Project REACH, which promotes school stability and academic success for children and youth. In November and December, the Scholarship Trust conducted a campaign to increase scholarship funding, aiming to award three four-year scholarships to high school seniors entering college this fall.

Membership remains steady, with new members continuously welcomed. The branch's website serves as a key communication tool, and the adoption of Mail Chimp has streamlined direct member communications.

The branch has been updating its bylaws and standing rules. A member survey was conducted to align member interests with involvement opportunities within the branch.

Members have attended presentations by various speakers, including:

- Tom Hanson, a former U.S. Foreign Service Officer;
- Sheri Brenden, author of *Break Point: Two Minnesota Athletes and the Road to Title IX*, and her sister Peg Brenden, who filed a federal lawsuit in 1972 challenging a rule that prevented her from joining a high school team;
- Sam Freedman, author, journalist, and Columbia Journalism School professor; and
- Mara Glubka, an at-large member of ERA Minnesota.

AAUW Thief River Falls

On Thursday, August 22, members of the Thief River Falls AAUW Branch traveled to Oklee, MN, to participate in the Coya Knutson Post Office Renaming Event:

H.R.5951 - To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 202 2nd Avenue, in Oklee, Minnesota, as the "Coya Knutson Post Office."

Coya Knutson, born Cornelia Gjesdahl in 1912 on a farm in Edmore, North Dakota, made history as the first woman from Minnesota to serve in the United States House of Representatives.

After earning a degree in education from Concordia College in 1934 and briefly studying opera at Juilliard, Knutson returned to the Midwest, where she settled in Oklee, Minnesota. There, she married Andy Knutson, taught school, and ran a small hotel. Her involvement in local politics in the 1940s led to her election to the Minnesota state legislature, where she served from 1950 to 1953. In 1954, Knutson ran a successful grassroots campaign for Congress, becoming a representative for Minnesota's Ninth District. Known for her independent spirit and dedication to agricultural issues, she quickly gained a reputation in Washington for her strong advocacy.

Coya Knutson passed away in 1996, leaving behind a legacy of breaking barriers for women in politics and championing causes such as student loans, cystic fibrosis research, and support for Minnesota's farmers.

Thief River Falls AAUW Charter Member, Gretchen Urness Beito, authored the book, ***Coya Come Home: A Congresswoman's Journey***. Gretchen was one of the featured speakers at the dedication ceremony.

A book discussion included ***Neither Wolf nor Dog: On Forgotten Roads with an Indian Elder***, by Kent Nerburn.

Each November, Thief River Falls AAUW members host a *Women of Honor* event that features local women who have made outstanding contributions to the area through their professional and volunteer involvements.

AAUW Winona

During the 2024 election cycle, the Winona AAUW Branch and League of Women Voters co-sponsored local and legislative candidate forums for the positions up for election. The forums were well attended and very informative on the issues that people were concerned about.