

THE MONTHLY MONITOR

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF AAUW ST. CLOUD (MN) AREA



Memo from Mahogany BY MAHOGANY MORRISON, BRANCH PRESIDENT

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WHAT a way to welcome our April! Rain, snow, sleet, and wind, but I see SUNSHINE as I gaze outside my window this morning April 1. It brings to mind how our perspective is impacted by whatever our current “view” may be – some saw more snow, some more rain, etc. That is the beauty and also challenge of DEI work – diversity, equity, and inclusion. Easy to say, hard to do!

Our branch membership is overflowing with cultural, professional, and socioeconomic diversity! I would like to start focusing more on what we can each learn from each other by tapping in to our internal resources and subject-matter experts: our members!

In the coming months, look to see programming/events such as “lunch and learn,” “Coffee and Desert with.....,” “What you need to know about,” and other such presentations featuring a conversation with one of our members (maybe you!). We will also shift our level of engagement by hosting more activities at College of St. Benedict as our sister Institutional Member.

I am always open to your ideas of ways to offer more diverse programs and events within our branch. Let’s chat!

I encourage you to come out, get involved, and stay engaged!

NEXT GENERAL BOARD MEETING: April 27 @ 6-8 p.m.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!



Chloe Lindberg
St. Cloud State University
Early Childhood Education



Maytee Rodriguez Ortiz
College of St. Benedict
Sociology/Latin-Latino American Studies

Women's History Month Celebration

Submitted by Mahogany Morrison

AAUW was a proud co-sponsor of a joint Women's History Month celebration event that was held at SCSU on Monday, March 20th. The SCSU President's Office, Office of Institutional Equity and Access (OEA), Student Affairs: Women's Center and Deans of Students Office, Graduate Studies, and another local Women's group also hosted the event.

The event provided a platform of unification, celebration of women (those who identify or not), and continued effort to build a sense of community, camaraderie, and empowerment. It was also an opportunity for participants to identify a mentor/mentee and individuals were encouraged to leave their contact information.

AAUW St. Cloud Branch President, Mahogany Morrison, presented a break-out session at this event entitled, "Discovering the Authentic Me", which was designed to facilitate conversation regarding the BIPOC experience in higher education, in particular that of black women. The focus will be exploration and discussion of the concept of the creation of dual and/or multiple identities created by these women while attempting to navigate the higher education learning environment. All are welcome.

AAUW members who attended this event: SCSU President, Robyn Wacker, VP of Finance, Barb Wismer, and Chocoletta Simpson

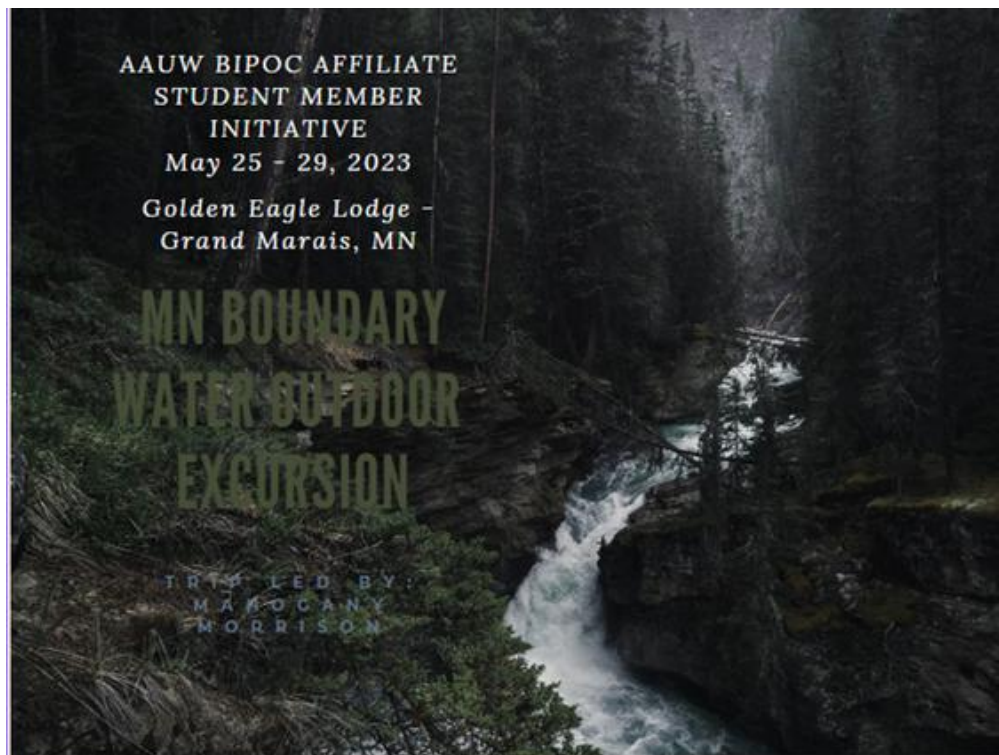
BIPOC MN OUTDOOR WILDERNESS EXCURSION

Submitted by Mahogany Morrison

In September 2022, MPR did an In-Focus segment regarding, “How to Overcome the So-called Nature Gap.” Historically, outdoor recreation has been a white, wealthy, able-bodied and male-dominated realm. Here in Minnesota, about 20 percent of Minnesotans identify as people of color. But according to a Department of Natural Resources study, people of color make up only five percent of state park visitors.

Research has shown the importance of both in classroom and outside of classroom learning experiences for student success and development.

Aligning with our mission to “advance gender equity for women and girls via “education,” Branch President,



Mahogany Morrison recently shared a presentation with our Board regarding the challenges and disparities facing BIPOC communities who often lack both the resources and opportunity to engage in simple outdoor recreational activities such as swimming, camping, hiking, fishing, boating, and canoeing.

In response to this presentation, the Board approved a BIPOC MN Outdoor Wilderness Excursion for a group of 8 BIPOC AAUW University Student Affiliate women members, which will be led by Mahogany at the Golden Eagle Lodge in Grand Marais this Memorial Day weekend.

2023 HIGH SCHOOL JURIED ART EXHIBITION

The Paramount and AAUW as a sponsor are committed to hosting a meaningful experience that showcases student work from across Central Minnesota. This program is designed to complement the work of area teachers by providing students with the opportunity to visualize themselves as artists, explore ways to talk about their work, and to participate in an arts-based experience among peers. As we transition back to an in-person gallery exhibit staff would like to invite you, participating students and their families to the Paramount for the 2023 Awards Ceremony on Friday, April 28 from 5:30 – 7:00 PM.



Program overview...

More than 30 area high schools, located within a 35-mile radius of the Paramount Center for the Arts, are invited to participate in the Juried Show: generally featuring the work of about 100 students annually.

AAUW judges include...

*Mary Lou Lenz, Lynn Metcalf, Kathryn Gainey, and Bobbie McMonagle. **Winners of the AAUW 2-D and 3-D awards will be announced in the May Newsletter!***

MEET OUR JUROR!

My name is Vatsalaa Jha. I graduated from UW- Madison in 2014, where I studied Art and Honors in the Liberal Arts. I am originally from India. I immigrated to the United States in 2001 with my family.

Art has been a way for me to find joy.

My art always ends up having flavors of intended concepts, deeper meanings, and perhaps overall truths about myself. I have found that art is a way for me to escape from the world and focus on myself and what I can create rather than the creation of someone or something else. I can focus on what I am capable of conceptualizing, connecting, and presenting to others rather than the other way around. And what better way than through colors, shapes, feelings, emotions, etc.? So, not surprisingly, I dive deeper and find an exciting facet of my identity in the art piece to share a truth that connects us all with the world. I strive to create art that stimulates personal reflection while expressing the deep connections we share with others around us. As an artist, I am interested in expressions of deep connection between people, juxtaposed with the uniqueness and diversity we all contain.

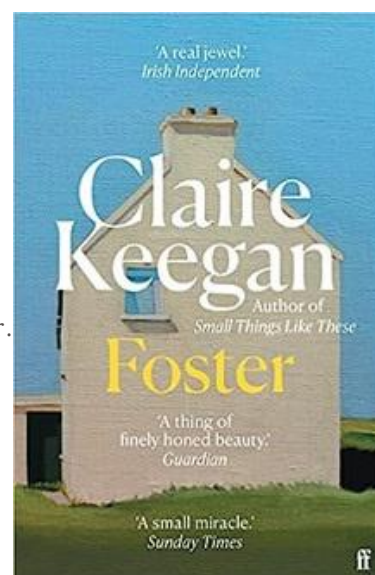


News from AAUW Book Club

Submitted by Mary Harlander-Locke

The AAUW Thursday night book group read *FOSTER* by Claire Keegan for their March book. *FOSTER* is a novella that includes a heartbreaking story of childhood, loss, love, and compassion. It takes place in County Wexford, a rural county located in southeastern Ireland. The book is written from the perspective of a young girl who is taken by her father to live with relatives on a farm for perhaps the summer or longer since her mom is pregnant with her 4th child. The child's father is an alcoholic and has trouble holding down work and spends little time at home. It's a story about two families, one who has lost their only child and the other who seemingly have more children than they can adequately care for. The author has won numerous writing awards and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2022. The book group recommends it!

- Linda: I liked the writing style - easy to envision the characters and their living arrangements.
- Barb: The story involves underlying sadness but is a great read.
- Donna: The story involves the young girl finding love and kindness in her foster family (aunt and uncle); things she doesn't experience in her birth family home.
- Kathryn: My family is Irish and I was interested in this story of Irish families including the young girl that was the main character.
- Donna: One could identify with the young girl being fostered for the summer. The Kinsellas shared kindness with her, such that she had not really experienced at home.
- Mary: Even though it was heart wrenching at times, there was hope, and the young girl learned a lot about love and compassion, during the summer spent at the Kinsellas.
- Suzanne: I thought the story was one of hope...it stays with you. The ending is one that you need to define.
- Trish: Reading the book on my Kindle, it seemed like it ended too soon or perhaps too abruptly. Since it takes place in the early 80's, there are hints of "the Troubles" that were prevalent in Ireland and Northern Ireland during this time.
- Laura: Very poignant story about a young girl and her life at home (where she was quiet and invisible) and then her life for a summer with a family that cared.



And, if you'd like to join our book club, please contact me (mhlocke@csbsju.edu). The schedule of books we are reading can be found on our [AAUW Branch website](#). April's book is *SEA of TRANQUILITY* by Emily St. John Mandel.

AAUW Member Highlight

NCCWSL Sales Presentation

Current AAUW St. Cloud Area Branch members, Jan Benson and Hannah Mikels, along with St. Cloud State University Marketing professors Denny Bristow and Dave Titus, submitted a



workshop proposal and have been accepted to present at the 2023 National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL). The theme for this year's conference, which is taking place at the University of Maryland in College Park from May 31-June 3, is "Engage, Learn and Lead: Step Into Your Power!" The group from St. Cloud will be facilitating a workshop focused on increasing confidence and sales skills in young women. A recording of the

presentation will also be made available to other branches across the state to allow for broader access to the valuable insight.

"Maker Mondays" with SCRAPS

St. Cloud Recycled Art Project Shop

Do you like making things with your hands? If the answer is "yes," the City of St. Cloud has a great opportunity for you - a program called "[SCRAPS](#)." Various discarded items from businesses are collected for artistic creations. The City of St. Cloud is sponsoring "Maker Mondays" for anyone who would like to create with these scraps. A local artist will on hand for guidance and support.

The dates and times are listed below:

- April 24, 6-8 PM
- May 22, 6-8 PM
- June 26, 6-8 PM

All "Maker Mondays" take place at St. Cloud City Hall, 1201 7th Street South

Upcoming 2023 Events Schedule

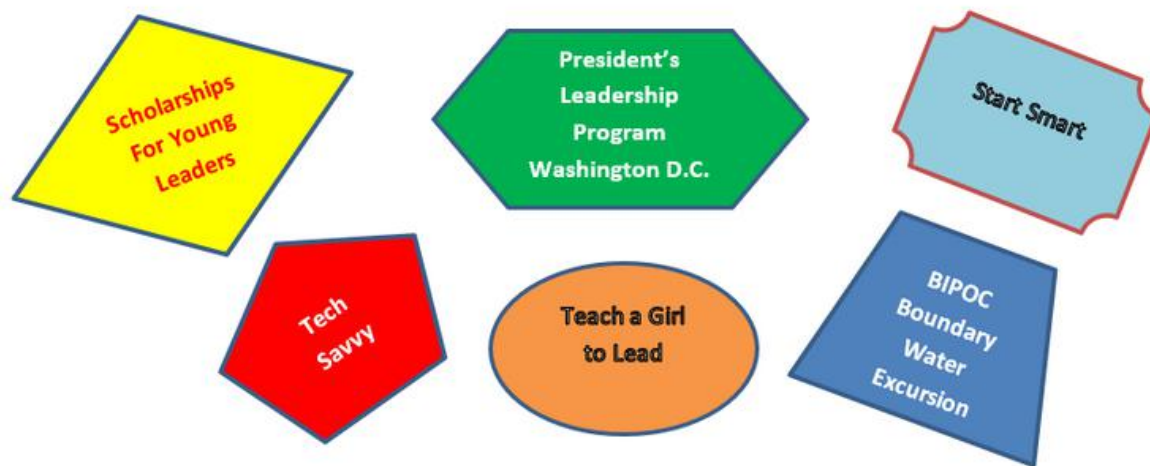
- **April:** Mahogany Morrison, AAUW St. Cloud (MN) Area Branch President, "State of our Branch"
- **May:** St. Cloud Symphony Artistic Director and Conductor, Hisman Bravo Grover & Paramount Center for the Arts Executive Director, Bob Johnson

April Dinner Event "AAUW Year in A Glance" Come Celebrate Our Successful 2022-2023!

Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

Atwood Memorial Center, St. Cloud State University

Join our Branch President and Executive Branch Members for an informative summary of our Branch activities for the past year. We will be providing a brief summary of the "State of our Branch" including finance, membership, fundraising, communications, and activities we participated in last year as well as those we are planning for the upcoming months and next fiscal year. This will be an opportunity to meet new members and hear about the exciting new programs and initiatives we are launching under the direction of our new Branch President, Mahogany Morrison.



Reservation Deadline: April 5, 2023

Cost: \$25

To reserve your spot, please email aauwsaintcloud@gmail.com with "**Reservation**" in the subject line.