

April 1, 2025

# THE MONTHLY MONITOR

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



## Saint Cloud Area (MN) Branch *Memo From The Board*

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And More...

In this month's Board meeting we got a report on the website from our Web Administrator, Rene Kaluza. It contained feedback on things we want to do to improve the site. Please, if you have any ideas, use the Feedback Form at <https://stcloud-mn.aauw.net/members/>.

AAUW National has announced that National dues will be increasing by \$2.00 this year, and then \$2.00 next year. So renewal dues will be \$110.00. And thank you for your continuing membership.

Voting continues regarding the options we presented to resolve our Programs shortfall. If you haven't already voted, please respond to my email of March 10, sent to all members. The voting deadline is March 31, 2025, and we'll go with the majority vote for next season's programs.

We recently had some good ideas presented at a brainstorming session for ways to increase our membership. We're going to print more brochures for our members to leave at friendly businesses or outings that you attend. We are a non-profit charitable organization, supporting education and equity for girls and women, so having our brochures at local businesses should not be objectionable. Look for more information shortly.

April 1, 2025

## Branch Update(s)

### Changes in Dues

As valued members of AAUW, I wanted to let you know that the National AAUW Board approved a modest dues adjustment – \$2 per year over the next two years:

New national dues: \$74 starting April 1, 2025, and \$76 starting April 1, 2026.

National has heard us! They were originally planning a \$5 increase each year; however, we were given an opportunity to comment on this plan and we protested the amount of the increase. So it's down \$2 each year. We really appreciate that modification.

How does this impact you? When you receive your email notice to renew your membership for 2025-2026 fiscal year (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026) the amount due to renew will be \$110 (\$74 for National + \$9 for State + \$27 for Branch).

Member dues are an important funding source for AAUW. While costs for National member support increase annually, dues have not necessarily kept pace. Your member dues help fund National member services such as:

- \* Administrative Support: Assist with dues processing, Community Hub management, 990N filings, branding materials, and tools that support our mission for DEI and to strengthen our college & university membership.

- \* Website Support: Update and manage ~500 branch and state websites and provide ongoing Site Resources support.

- \* Member Trainings: Hold regular virtual member gatherings and training programs.

- \* Member Engagement: Organize member-led groups and committees like Archives Corps, Lobby Corps, and national committees.

- \* Speaker Engagement: Offer National speakers for branch meetings and state conventions.

- \* Real-Time Support: Connect Team provides daily assistance and semi-weekly "Office Hours" for member leaders.

The dues increase helps to balance AAUW's financial sustainability and we thank you for continuing to support our important mission!

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## AAUW National

Do women in your state  
earn **equal** pay?



**The truth is — no. Every U.S. state still shows a significant gender pay gap.**

In 2023, women working full-time, year-round earned just 83% of what men earned — \$55,240 compared to \$66,790. That's a loss that adds up year after year, leaving women and their families at a lasting financial disadvantage.

**Give TODAY to support AAUW!**

AAUW's latest, *The Not So Simple Truth*, exposes the deep-rooted factors that perpetuate pay inequity and outlines urgent steps needed to close the gap.

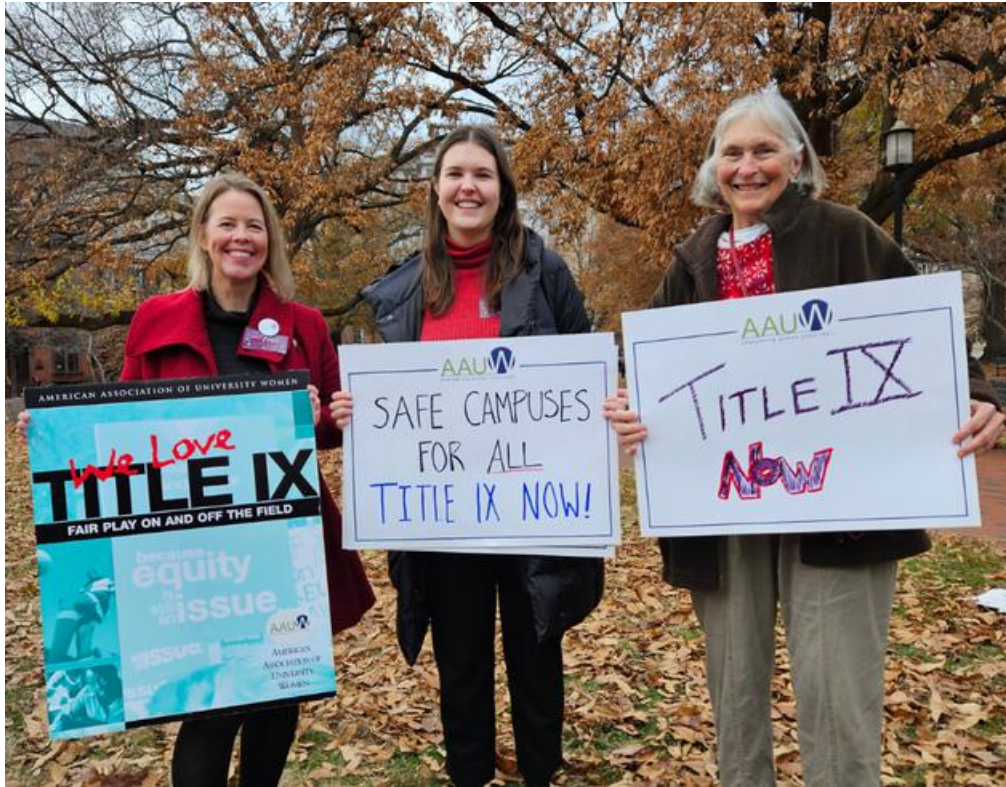
We know that **higher education is one of the most powerful tools we have in achieving economic empowerment.** [But education is under attack.](#)

That's why we're proud to launch the [Defend Higher Education Fund](#) — a bold initiative to fight back against efforts that threaten women's access to education and the economic mobility that comes with it. This new fund will help AAUW:

- **Elevate the critical higher education issues** impacting women nationwide
- **Mobilize advocates** and build a movement to protect educational equity
- **Provide strategic resources** to students, staff, and faculty
- **Invest in infrastructure and technology** that empower our mission and expand opportunity

April 1, 2025

## AAUW Defends Higher Education



## Tell Congress to Oppose Attacks on Higher Education

President Trump's executive order to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education is another reckless attack on education in America.

Threats to dismantle the Department and cut funding for critical programs—such as the Department's Office for Civil Rights, campus-based child care 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 take action to support students and oppose all efforts to dismantle and cut funding to the Department of Education.

We provide a sample letter and encourage you to personalize by sharing the impact on your community. To edit the body of your message, click the pencil icon in the bottom-left corner of the text box.

Questions? Reach out to [advocacy@aauw.org](mailto:advocacy@aauw.org).



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## AAUW Defends Higher Education

**Defending Equity: Strengthening Our Collective Impact Series**  
Amid growing attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion, AAUW is taking action. This series equips members with key policy updates, advocacy strategies, and tools to strengthen our impact. Join one or all sessions to stay informed and take action!

### **Building A Stronger AAUW**

**April 1 | 7:00 p.m. ET**

Strong fundraising fuels AAUW's impact. This session, led by AAUW National's Advancement Committee, will provide strategies for successful branch fundraising. Learn about AAUW's budget, the Greatest Needs Fund, and hear directly from branches with proven fundraising success. Walk away with tools and resources to help your branch grow its financial support. [Register here.](#)

### **AAUW Advocacy Strategies for In-District Meetings**

**April 8 | 7:00 p.m. ET**

Face-to-face advocacy can drive real change. This session will guide members on how to set up in-district meetings with members of Congress, maximize town hall participation, and effectively use key talking points during the upcoming April congressional recess. Learn how to make your voice heard. [Register Here.](#)

### **Funding Futures: Understanding Changes to Sex and Gender-Based Scholarship Programs**

**April 15 | 7:00 p.m. ET**

Navigating legal changes to sex-based scholarships can be complex. This interactive session will provide information to AAUW branches on funding scholarships amid evolving regulations while staying true to our mission of advancing education for women and girls. Space is limited.

[Register Here.](#)

### **Missed the Event? Watch the Recording!**

If you couldn't join us live for AAUW's Legacy & Impact: Looking Back at 2024, we've got you covered! This special access event was exclusively for Legacy Circle members, State Presidents, and Champions, featuring insights from AAUW leaders as they reflected on the achievements of Fiscal Year 2024, shared key highlights from our Annual Report, and discussed the impact of our collective support. [📺 Watch the recording here.](#)

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Star Tribune

Check out this article in the Star Tribune by our very own AAUW MN President, Kelsey Waits and the League of Women Voters of Minnesota executive director, Michelle Witte.

Try as the Trump administration might, it can't erase women

By Kelsey Waits and Michelle Witte

March 23, 2025 at 5:29PM



The National Women's March on Nov. 2, 2024, in Boston. (Michael Dwyer/The Associated Press)

April 1, 2025

## Star Tribune Article

As Women's History Month nears a close, so might the recognition of diverse Americans. New Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, citing concerns that acknowledgments like special historical months “erode camaraderie and threaten mission execution,” ordered the military to stop recognizing identity – just one day before Black History Month began. But he didn't stop there. He went on to erase the history of women and people of color from the Department of Defense website, with the U.S. Air Force alone reporting the removal of 45,000 pieces of content.

Now the federal government is going even further – banning or limiting nearly 200 terms from government materials and websites. Words that describe key aspects of the human experience – *accessible, advocate, belong, Black, cultural heritage, disabilities, equal opportunity, expression, gender, Indigenous community, justice, mental health, pollution, trauma, victim, vulnerable populations* – are being erased. And among them? The ultimate F-word: *female*.

Words like *females, feminism, pregnant person, women and underrepresented* – terms that describe the health and life experiences of women – are disappearing from federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control.

*But we will not be erased.*

April 1, 2025

## Star Tribune Article

The American Association of University Women of Minnesota and the League of Women Voters of Minnesota are still here – 4,000 members strong, spanning 58 branches across the state. For over 100 years, we've been educating, empowering and advocating to create an equitable future for women, girls and all in our democracy. We've spent a century pulling women out of the shadows, and no amount of revisionism can push us back.

We are nonpartisan. We do not endorse or oppose candidates or political parties. But we are not neutral. A thriving democracy demands engagement, and we take action on the issues that shape our communities. It is not partisan to defend democracy. It is not partisan to educate people about our past. It is not partisan to support the rule of law.



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## Star Tribune Article

And in this moment, we are compelled to remind Americans of a fundamental civic truth: Our Constitution tells the story of an evolving and more inclusive democracy.

Beginning with the ratification of the Bill of Rights in 1791, the amendments to our Constitution have expanded the definition of “We the People,” striving to “establish justice” and “secure the blessings of liberty” for all. From the right to bear arms to the abolition of slavery, from the right of women to vote to the elimination of poll taxes, our history reflects a slow but steady march toward providing the blessings of liberty to a diverse country, promoting greater equity and inclusion for *all* within the American dream. It’s a story of both deep injustice and extraordinary progress – one that should be illuminated, not erased.

This Women’s History Month, we honor those who paved the way before us. As Sojourner Truth, a former enslaved woman turned civil and women’s rights leader, once declared:

“I am not afraid to stand alone, to speak my truth, and to fight for what is right ... . I will not allow the fire of my passion to be extinguished by the cold winds of indifference and injustice.”

We’ve been here before. We know how to shine a light on what matters – “We the People” working together to create safe, healthy, equitable communities where everyone belongs.

Let’s keep the F-word alive. Let’s keep fighting for what is right and lighting the way for all to follow. Please join [AAUW-MN](#) and [LWVMN](#) and remain visible with us!

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## Update from November Program

# CONGRATS ARE IN ORDER!

In November of 2024 we had the pleasure of hearing from Elizabeth and Diane from Annandale Art and Textile Center in Annandale, MN about their work with young adults who are differently-abled and are weaving artists in the center. I wanted to share some good news regarding their studio. On April 24-26 they will be participating in their first art show at Northrup King in Minneapolis. It is sponsored by Art for All, the Stephanie Evelo for Art Inclusion at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration, and promotes the work of artists with disabilities to create more beautiful and inclusive communities.

Check Annandale Art and Textiles Facebook page for further details.



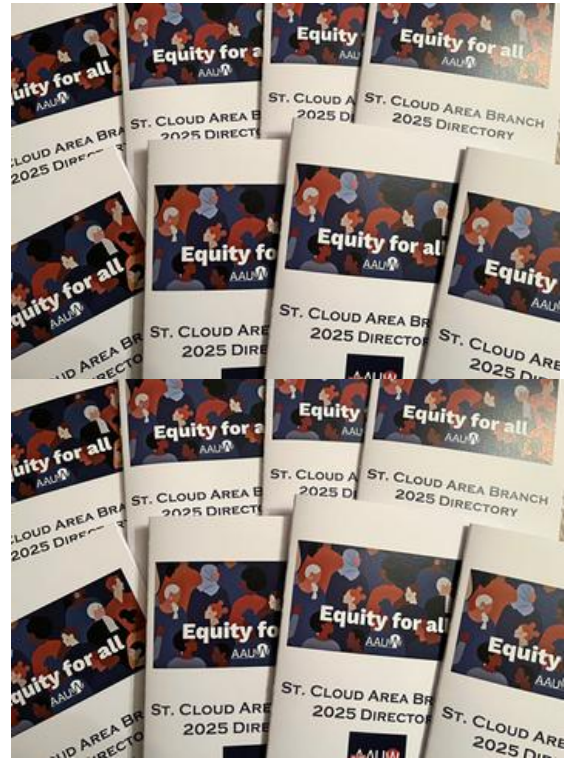
April 1, 2025

## Branch Update(s)

The AAUW Membership Directory is ready for you and is **FREE!**

The directories were given out at the December meeting and were available AT THE JANUARY MEETING. If you could not attend the January meeting and would like a hard copy of the directory you can do the following

1. Send a 5x7 self addressed and stamped envelope (2 stamps) to  
Kathryn Gainey  
1193 59th Ave SE  
St. Cloud, MN. 56304
2. You can print out the digital version that was sent to you a couple of weeks ago.



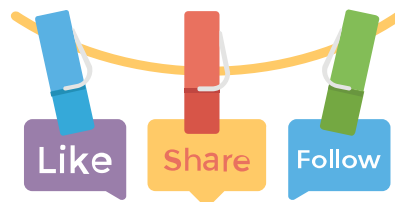
## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

AAUW has some exciting social media updates for the month! First, we just started an Instagram, it can be found with the username: @aauwstcloud. We also are active on Facebook, which can be found by searching "AAUW St. Cloud Area." Check us out on both platforms for updates about our events and photos!

We are happy to have anyone contribute to the social medias and continue to stay active, reach out to Ceci McNair through email: [cecimcnair@gmail.com](mailto:cecimcnair@gmail.com) to have any photographs or updates posted! By maintaining an active social media presence, we can find new members and keep the community posted on our events. Thanks so much for your engagement and support!



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM

April 1, 2025

## Member Feedback



We're starting a new feature in the newsletter and calling it "Member Feedback". If there is anything you wish to comment on (either positive or negative), do please let us know.

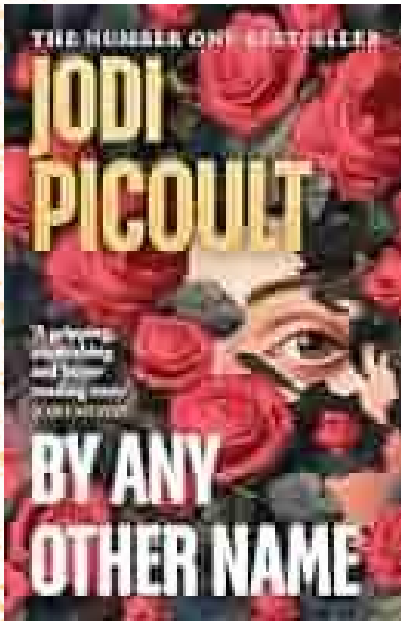
Send your comments to Jamie Swenson, [jamie\\_2992@yahoo.com](mailto:jamie_2992@yahoo.com) by the 15th of the month, and she'll add it to the next month's newsletter. We're looking forward to hearing from you!





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## AAUW Book Clubs

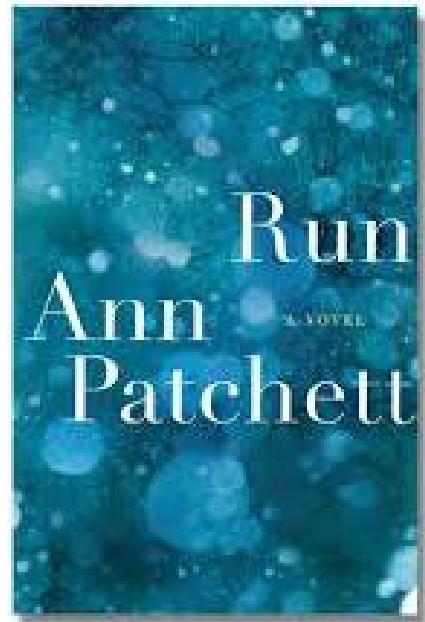


The Thursday AAUW Book Club meets next on Thursday, April 24, 2025 @ 6:30p.m. to discuss “By Any Other Name” by Jodi Picoult.

Hosted by: Suzanne  
AAUW members can contact Mary Harlander-Locke if they are interested in joining.

The AAUW’s Wednesday Literature Group meets next on Wednesday, April 2, 2025 @ 1:00p.m. to discuss “Run” by Ann Patchett.

Hosted by: Helen Bettendorf  
Presenter: Mary Lou Lenz  
Want to join in on the fun, contact Molly Ewing at 320-252-2166



April 1, 2025

# 2025 High School Art Exhibition

## 2025 Juried High School Exhibition

OPENING RECEPTION AND AWARDS CEREMONY  
FRIDAY, APRIL 4TH  
5:30PM - 7:30PM



Annually, the Paramount Center for the Arts, along with our dedicated sponsors, hosts a regional art show and competition in which schools across Central Minnesota are invited to participate.



Olivia R.  
Avance  
Stoneware and Gold Leaf

The St. Cloud AAUW is a co-sponsor of the 2025 High School Art Exhibition at the Paramount. The opening and reception for the show is April 4<sup>th</sup>. Come to honor the talented students and see their exceptional artwork. Paintings, drawings, sculpture, and jewelry are some of the work on display in the lobby gallery and a special display in the gift shop. The reception is filled with students, parents, grandparents, friends, etc. and it gives great visibility to our organization. Barb Wismer will be presenting our two awards on the stage of the Paramount that evening. Please come to this event!!

*The 2024 AAUW  
2D winner  
Colorful Wonder (A  
self-portrait painting  
of the artist as an  
innocent child learning  
about the world)*

Lydia Holmgren  
Sartell High School  
Grade 12



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## April 2025 Program

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Atwood Memorial Center

Parking: 4th Ave Parking Ramp (Paid);

Free parking in Lot “C” 4th Ave/5th Street after 4:30 pm

(Suzanne Rodell) Ellen Heneghan, Charlotte Stephens

### **Our Region's Natural Parks and Trails**

Learn how the Natural Parks and Trails Coalition, (a local organization you've likely never heard of), has had an extraordinary impact on preserving our natural heritage. Our group has worked for three decades to create park land acquisition and trail development. Hear about the challenges and triumphs, and what was learned along the way. With gorgeous photos, you will also learn about stunning nearby natural parks as well as four regional trails.

**Deadline to RSVP is April 1, 2025**

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## May 2025 Program

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Atwood Memorial Center

Parking: 4th Avenue Ramp or Miller Pay Lot

(Barb) Annual Business Meeting plus AAUW National Speaker (Video or Virtual)

### **“Current Status of AAUW National Lobbying Efforts”**

In addition to holding our annual Member Recognition and Business Meeting (including reports from our Financial, Membership, and Public Policy chairwomen), we have requested a speaker (either on Video or Virtually) from AAUW National. We’re hoping to secure an update on National lobbying and advocacy efforts, including what is being promoted, current status and how AAUW National promotes issues in support of our mission.

**Deadline to RSVP is May 6, 2025**



April 1, 2025

# HOW TO MAKE A RESERVATION FOR A MONTHLY PROGRAM...

**Email:** [aauwsaintcloud@gmail.com](mailto:aauwsaintcloud@gmail.com)

**Subject Line:** Reservations

**Email Body/Message:** Please  
reserve [#] places for [Name] for  
the program on [Date]. I am a  
[Member, Student or Guest] and I  
require a  
[Special Dietary Needs] meal.  
Thanks!

**Deadline to make reservations is ONE WEEK from  
the date of the program.**

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## AAUW 2024 Webinar Schedule

These webinars are designed to provide you with the tools and knowledge needed to negotiate better salaries, enhance your career, and achieve financial independence. Whether you're a student stepping into the professional world or a seasoned professional aiming to advance, our webinars offer valuable insights for every stage of your career.

Check out our schedule and secure your spot to start transforming your future today.

All the below webinars are FREE for students from member institutions.

AAUW Work Smart: Refresher	Wednesday, April 9, 2025	3:00 - 4:00 p.m. ET	<a href="#">REGISTER NOW</a>
AAUW Start Smart	Wednesday, April 16, 2025	5:00 - 6:00 p.m. ET	<a href="#">REGISTER NOW</a>
AAUW Money Smart: Smart Foundations	Thursday, April 24, 2025	3:00 - 4:00 p.m. ET	<a href="#">REGISTER NOW</a>
AAUW Work Smart: Develop Your Value Statement Deep Dive	Wednesday, May 13, 2025	3:00 - 4:00 p.m. ET	<a href="#">REGISTER NOW</a>
AAUW Start Smart	Thursday, May 21, 2025	4:00 - 5:00 p.m. ET	<a href="#">REGISTER NOW</a>
AAUW Money Smart: Smart Finances	Tuesday, May 27, 2025	3:00 - 4:00 p.m. ET	<a href="#">REGISTER NOW</a>
AAUW Work Smart: Refresher	Wednesday, June 11, 2025	4:00 - 5:00 p.m. ET	<a href="#">REGISTER NOW</a>
AAUW Start Smart	Wednesday, June 18, 2025	4:00 - 5:00 p.m. ET	<a href="#">REGISTER NOW</a>
AAUW Money Smart: Smart Future	Thursday, June 26, 2025	5:00 - 6:00 p.m. ET	<a href="#">REGISTER NOW</a>

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## Message from Membership Matters



### Make Your Voice Heard

As an AAUW member, your voice counts. If you need help having conversations surrounding the dues increase with your members, consider AAUW National's value to affiliates such as:

- monthly salary negotiation and financial literacy **trainings**;
- administrative support for branches related to dues processing, Community Hub, 990Ns, branding materials, and the other various **toolkits and resources**;
- advancing AAUW's member-supported policy agenda
- **speakers for branch meetings** and state conventions to provide subject matter expertise and updates;
- **weekly office hours** and support from the Connect Team;
- and many other **benefits**.



April 1, 2025

## Whats happening with the LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS OF ST. CLOUD AREA???

### Calendar

#### March 2025

- 13 Unit Meeting, Zoom, Mississippi Rm, Library 1:00pm (Thursday)
- 19 Board Meeting, 4:00pm
- 20 Book Club, 6:30pm
- 21 Submissions Due for Annual Meeting Supplement
- 22 Anniversary Dinner, 5:00pm
- 24 *League Lines* deadline, noon

March						
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

#### April 2025

- 8 ISD 742 School Bond election
- 9 Unit Meeting, Zoom only, 1:00pm
- 16 LWVMN Lobby Day
- 16 Board Meeting, 4:00pm
- 17 Book Club, 6:30pm
- 26 LWVSCA Annual Meeting: 11:00am
- 28 *League Lines* deadline, noon

April						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

*League Lines* is a publication of the League of Women Voters of the St. Cloud Area,  
PO BOX 5084, Saint Cloud MN 56302

Visit us at [www.lwvsca.org](http://www.lwvsca.org) or [www.facebook.com/lwvstcloudarea](https://www.facebook.com/lwvstcloudarea)

Email us at: [lwvstcloud@lwvmn.org](mailto:lwvstcloud@lwvmn.org)

Via Twitter at: <https://x.com/LWVofStCloud>

Follow us on Instagram at: <https://www.instagram.com/lwvstcloudarea/>

**MISSION:** The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging the informed and active participation in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy. League of Women Voters affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of the membership and strives to overcome barriers of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability in the activities of the organization.

President: Ralph Carr

Secretary: Diana Kasper

Treasurer: Claudia Anderson

Membership: Karen Langsjoen

Editor: Marlene Haider

To join or renew your membership go to [www.lwvsca.org/membership](http://www.lwvsca.org/membership).



April 1, 2025

## Meet Your Board Members

### Executive Board Members



Barb Wismer  
Branch President



Jan Benson  
Co-VP Finance



Mary Harlander-Locke  
Co-VP Finance



Molly Ewing  
Recording Secretary



Kathryn Gainey  
Recording Secretary  
Alternate



Pat Obstarczyk  
Co-VP membership



Leah Stanek  
Co-VP membership



Jan Benson  
VP Public Policy



OPEN  
VP Programs



OPEN  
VP of  
Communications

### Executive Board Members

### Voting - Standing Board Committee Chair Members



OPEN  
Monthly Program  
Chair



Caroline Williams  
Co-Social  
Chairwoman



Joyce Hummel  
Co-Social  
Chairwoman



Rene Kaluza  
Website



Jamie Swenson  
Monthly Newsletter



Cecilia McNair  
Social Media

### Voting - Standing Board Committee Chair Members



OPEN  
Meet-a-Member



Kathryn Gainey  
Directories



Kathryn Gainey  
Ads & Fliers



Joanna Pucel  
Archives



Chris Lepkowski  
SCSU Representative



Whitney Court  
CSB Representative

### Non-Voting Advisory Board



Jan Benson  
Tech Savvy Event  
Chair



Keshia Anderson-King  
JEDI (Justice, Equity,  
Diversity & Inclusion  
Chair



OPEN  
NCCWSL Event Chair



Whitney Court  
Scholarships for  
Young Leaders



Barb Wismer  
Flash Funds Chair



Keshia Anderson-King  
8th Grade Graduation



OPEN  
Start Smart Event -  
SCSU



Christi Siver  
Start Smart Event - CSB



OPEN  
Student Membership  
Liaisons - SCSU



OPEN  
Student Membership  
Liaisons - CSB



Fay Bolin  
Fundraising  
Committee



Peggy Lodewyk  
Fundraising  
Committee

### Non-Voting Advisory Board



Joyce Hummel  
Fundraising  
Committee



Kathy Kampa  
Fundraising  
Committee



Kathryn Gainey  
Fundraising  
Committee



Cindy Leigh  
Fundraising  
Committee



OPEN  
Fundraising  
Committee



OPEN  
Fundraising  
Committee