

June 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...

Happy Summer! Our May Board meeting covered a variety of topics, primarily planning for our next program season. We did want to remind you that, in order to avoid our program deficit problem, we are moving next season to just serving snacks and hors d'oeuvres, for the same price of \$20.00. We will be planning more programs at the College of St. Ben's, and are in the midst of program planning for our upcoming season. It's going to be exciting!

In the meantime, we have our two summer gathering upcoming for June and for August. Still can't release details for the August gathering, but in June we'll be taking a field trip to Art in Motion and the Boho Cafe in Holdingford. On JUNE 24th at noon, we'll meet at Fleet Farm and carpool to the destination. Please RSVP so we can tell them how many to expect. Call Peggy at 320-293-7770 or Fay at 320-290-7815. Stay tuned for our August meeting details.

Our SCSU Student organization students are busy planning activities for their group, and are hoping to have a table at the Lemonade Art Fair on June 26th. Please go by and show them your support!! We are hoping to add a Student Group page to our website, so look out for that.

Speaking of the website, Rene wants to add a right-side area on each webpage, which would contain a quote from our current members, stating why they joined or why they enjoy belonging to AAUW. So please send her your pithy little quotes when you can.

We also discussed various fundraising ideas, but overall we are going with our standard October fundraising event, with dinner, entertainment, and raffle prizes. I'll be getting the fundraiser committee going on that very soon!

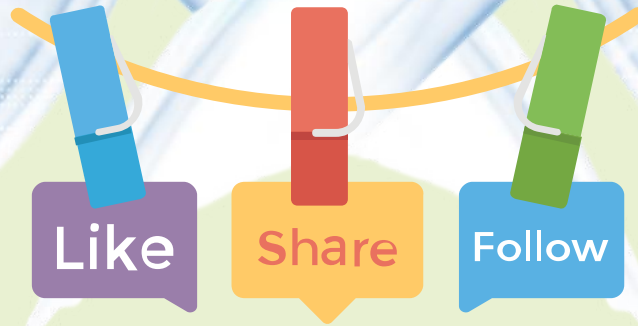
In the meantime, have a wonderful summer!

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FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM

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 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!



BRANCH WEBSITE

Why AAUW?

We're looking for some short testimonials to use on our AAUW branch website. We hope they will encourage new members and inspire existing members.

Please write 1-2 sentences that tell us why you love AAUW or why you enjoy membership or just answer one or more of the questions below. Include your name and how many years you have been a member.

Email your notes to website coordinator Rene Kaluza at: renevk1@gmail.com

Why do you belong to AAUW?

What are the benefits of AAUW membership for you?

Where do you think our AAUW has an impact?



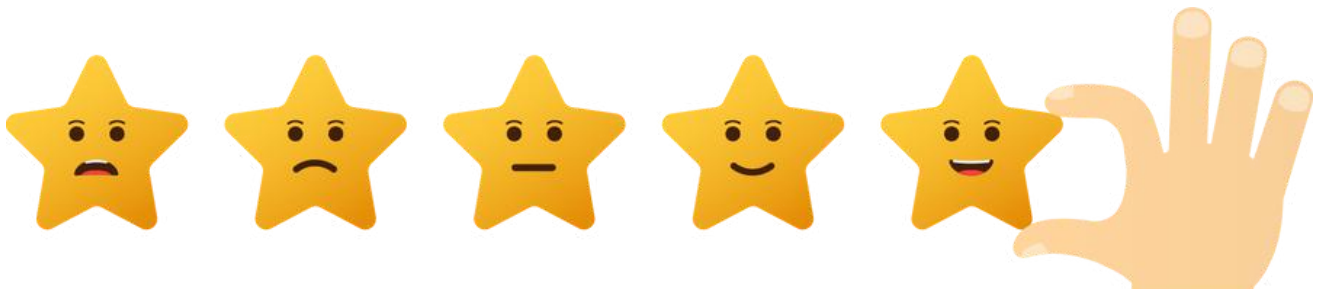
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Member Feedback



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 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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Member Feedback



Mary Anne Savage, long time member of AAUW St Cloud and the AAUW Afternoon Book Club passed away recently. In her obituary there were several places to send a memorium, but not the one where I thought she influenced the most people...except her SCSU French class members, of course....that being our local AAUW.

Hence, the idea: the next time you want to honor a dead sister in a big way, donate to our local AAUW group. This provides a lasting memorium since we know any donation to the group will be spent wisely and to honor all women...no exclusions...locally, state-wide and nationally.

Merci, Mary Ann, we will remember you as a wise and cherished AAUW member.

- Mary Lou Lenz



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AAUW Student Organization at SCSU

Meet The AY 2025-26

AAUW Student Organization Officers at SCSU

Meet Aditi, SCSU Student Organization President

"I am originally from Nepal and came to the U.S. to pursue my bachelor's degree in information systems. Leaving my parents behind especially with both my sibling and I studying abroad, was one of the hardest decisions I have ever made. But this journey has been full of growth, challenges, and unforgettable moments.

My time at SCSU has been truly transformative. I have connected with amazing people, gained real-world experience, and learned so much about myself. This campus has shaped me into a more confident, independent, and open-minded person. Through AAUW, I aim to create a welcoming space where students can have open, meaningful conversations about equity, empowerment, and education. I believe learning should be exciting and engaging, not just something we do for a grade. I want to encourage more students to get involved, speak up, and explore leadership opportunities. My hope is to help others feel as inspired and supported as I have felt during my time here." - Aditi



Aditi Dhakal, President

Meet Maria, SCSU Student Organization Vice President

"Hello! My name is Maria Shavers, and I'm an incoming freshman at St. Cloud State University, majoring in Political Science. I'm incredibly excited to join the AAUW student organization and bring my ideas, experiences, and passion for leadership to the table. As the former Student Council President at St. Cloud Tech High School and a proud member of the Young Women's Initiative Governor's Cabinet, I've had the opportunity to grow as a leader and advocate. These roles have shaped my drive to make a difference and uplift others, especially young women.

Volunteering at past AAUW events has been both inspiring and motivating. It's what encouraged me to take a more active role in this organization and continue contributing to meaningful change. I believe in the power of student voices and want to help empower others to step into leadership, get involved, and use their talents to create a better world. I'm especially passionate about creating space for conversations that matter and encouraging students—on campus and beyond—to participate in causes they believe in. I can't wait to meet everyone, exchange ideas, and work together to make a positive impact throughout the year ahead!" - Maria



Maria Shavers, Vice President

Meet Victoria, SCSU Student Organization Secretary

"Hi! My name is Victoria Helfenstein, and I'm a dedicated biochemistry student with a deep passion for science, advocacy, and community engagement. I'm committed to advancing equity in education and creating inclusive spaces that empower women and underrepresented voices in STEM. My academic journey is driven by curiosity and a desire to make meaningful contributions both in the lab and in the broader community. Outside the classroom, I'm actively involved in student organizations where I support initiatives that promote leadership development, academic success, and social responsibility.

As a student officer in AAUW, I'm excited to contribute to an organization that aligns so closely with my values. I hope to help foster a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all backgrounds feel encouraged to explore leadership opportunities and advocate for meaningful change. Through outreach, collaboration, and shared purpose, I'm committed to helping AAUW continue its mission of empowering women and advancing equity on campus and beyond!"

- Victoria



Victoria Helfenstein, Secretary

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May Program Review



Membership Appreciation:

Bonita Benschoter - 50 years - Honorary Lifetime Member

Helene Bettensdorf - 20 years

Judith Nixon-Hook - 5 years

Mary Petersen - 5 years

Mary Wagner - 5 years



Voting Results – Programs for Season 2025-2026

Program Proposal	Submitted by	Votes
The Honorable Laura M. Provinzino, District Judge Court of Minnesota	Bonnie Wenker	This is a given; we will be determining the topic and program time per the Committee
Panel Presentation by SCSU AAUW Student Organization (students will create and present)	Debra Carlson	13
Women in Leadership: From Barriers to Breakthroughs	Jamie Swenson	11
Planetarium show at SCSU Planetarium by David Williams	Caroline Williams	9
Mayor/City Administrator	Fay Bolin	8
Men as Allies: Redefining Masculinity & Gender Roles – maybe we could have a panel of men?	Jamie Swenson	7
Field Trip to new Children's Museum	???	6
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Chris Lepkowski	5
Transgender Youth	Kathryn Gainey	4
Intuition/Situational Awareness with Kelly Sager	Bonnie Wenker	4
Gender Pay Equity	Chris Lepkowski	4
Field Trip to Stearns History Museum	Barb Wismer	4
How to have teachers keep students busy – learn new ideas for students	Ginny Bisek	4
District 742: Teachers or others that are there daily	Peggy Lodewyck	3
Homelessness	Rose Molitor	3
Brainstorming: Adding more interest groups to our local AAUW group (Art Group, Travel Group, etc.)	Mary Lou Lenz	2

Do you have ideas for future Program topics???

Submit your ideas using this [link](#).

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

Email: 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.**

June 1, 2025

June Program



Please Join us!



AAUW JUNE GATHERING

An outing to Art in Motion and the Boho Cafe in Holdingford. On June 24th at noon, we'll meet at the north end of Fleet Farm and carpool to the destination. We can have lunch, view the art, walk to the covered bridge and hopefully enjoy a beautiful Minnesota summer day. Please join us! RSVP so we can tell them how many to expect: Call Peggy @ 320-293-7770 or Fay @ 320-290-7815.

Reservation Deadline June 21st.

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AAUW Book Clubs



The Thursday AAUW Book Club meets next on Thursday, June 19, 2025 @ 6:30p.m. to discuss “Creation Lake” by Rachel Kushner.

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

The AAUW’s Wednesday Literature Group meets next on Wednesday, June 4, 2025 @ 1:00p.m. to discuss the selection of books for 2025-2026.

Hosted by: Cleone at Hester Park
Presenter: Everybody

Want to join in on the fun,
contact Molly Ewing at 320-252-2166

Note:

Please bring
your own
chair
and
refreshments.



AAUW Strategic Priorities:

Advancing Equity through
Higher Education
(2025 and Beyond).



Our Purpose

AAUW advances equity for women and girls by championing success in higher education — a vital pathway to economic security. For over 140 years, AAUW has led the fight for gender equity through advocacy, funding, and collective action.

Strategic Priorities

1. Fund Higher Education

- Provide grants and fellowships for women in underserved communities and underrepresented fields like STEM.
- Support women in academia and research.
- Build networks for alumnae to lead and expand AAUW's impact globally.

2. Remove Barriers to Success in Education and the Workplace

- Champion legislation supporting paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, pay equity, and workplace harassment protections.
- Promote inclusive, safe, and accessible educational environments through enforcement of Title IX and other civil rights laws.

3. Strengthen AAUW's Reach

- Support an effective network of states and branches through aligned strategies and initiatives like the Five-Star Program.
- Grow organizational sustainability through member engagement and impact evaluation.

Call to Action

In a time of growing challenges to education access, AAUW must meet this moment. This strategic plan renews our commitment to higher education as the key to equity and empowers a stronger, unified movement to create lasting change.

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AAUW 2025 Election Results



Dear AAUW Members,

On behalf of the AAUW National Board of Directors, I am pleased to share the results of our 2025 national election. Thank you to all who voted and played a role in shaping the future of our organization. The full voting results can be found [here](#).

I am delighted to welcome our newly elected board members:

- **Hope Bennett**
- **Aaliyah El-Amin**
- **Dr. Monique Taylor**
- **Dr. Mayida Zaal**

We are also honored to welcome **Dr. Hope Ricciotti** as a newly appointed board member. Each of these outstanding women brings invaluable experience and commitment to advancing equity for women and girls. We look forward to their leadership and contributions in the years ahead.

In addition to our board elections, I'm pleased to report that both the proposed changes to the [AAUW bylaws](#) and the [Public Policy Principles and Priorities](#) were approved by an overwhelming majority of our voting members. These changes reflect our collective commitment to bold, forward-thinking advocacy and organizational effectiveness.

As we look to the future, we also take a moment to extend our deepest appreciation to our outgoing board members:

- **Cherie Sorokin, Board Chair**
- **Dr. Gloria Rodriguez, Board Vice Chair**
- **Dr. Mary Zupanc, Nominating Committee Chair**
- **Peggy Cabaniss, Board Finance Chair**

Each has served with dedication, wisdom, and passion, helping guide AAUW through a pivotal time in our history. We are profoundly grateful for their service and impact.

Thank you again for your active participation in this year's election and for all you do to support AAUW's mission. Together, we are creating a more equitable world for women and girls.



Regards,

Shannon Wolfe
Managing Director & Chief of Staff

June 1, 2025

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, June 11, 2025

4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
ET

REGISTER
NOW

AAUW Start Smart

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
ET

REGISTER
NOW

AAUW Money Smart: Smart Future

Thursday, June 26, 2025

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
ET

REGISTER
NOW

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Message from Membership Matters



Renewal Notice Reminders: Branches that have not opted out of having National handle renewal reminders will have emails sent to their members the week of the 20th of each month in conjunction with the schedule below. Finance officers receive confirmations as members pay online.

Month of	Expire Group Reminder #1	Expire Group Reminder #2	Expire Group Reminder #3	Expire Group Reminder #4
Apr 2025	5/31/2025	4/30/2025	03/31/2025	02/28/2025
May 2025	6/30/2025	5/31/2025	4/30/2025	03/31/2025
Jun 2025	7/31/2025	6/30/2025	5/31/2025	4/30/2025
Jul 2025	8/31/2025	7/31/2025	6/30/2025	5/31/2025
Aug 2025	9/30/2025	8/31/2025	7/31/2025	6/30/2025
Sep 2025	10/30/2025	9/30/2025	8/31/2025	7/31/2025
Oct 2025	11/30/2025	10/30/2025	9/30/2025	8/31/2025
Nov 2025	12/31/2025	11/30/2025	10/30/2025	9/30/2025
Dec 2025	1/31/2026	12/31/2025	11/30/2025	10/30/2025
Jan 2026	2/28/2026	1/31/2026	12/31/2025	11/30/2025
Feb 2026	3/31/2026	2/28/2026	1/31/2026	12/31/2025
Mar 2026	4/30/2026	3/31/2026	2/28/2026	1/31/2026

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Meet Your Board Members

Executive Board Members



Barb Wismer
Branch President



Jan Benson
Co-VP Finance



Mary Harlander-Locke
Co-VP Finance



Leah Stanek
Co-VP membership



Jan Benson
VP Public Policy



OPEN
VP Programs



Molly Ewing
Recording Secretary



OPEN
Recording Secretary
Alternate



Pat Obstarczyk
Co-VP membership



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



OPEN
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



OPEN
Start Smart Event -
SCSU



Christi Siver
Start Smart Event - CSB



OPEN
Student Membership
Liaisons - SCSU



Joyce Hummel
Fundraising
Committee



Kathy Kampa
Fundraising
Committee



Cindy Leigh
Fundraising
Committee



Whitney Court
Scholarships for
Young Leaders



Barb Wismer
Flash Funds Chair



Keshia Anderson-King
8th Grade Graduation



OPEN
Student Membership
Liaisons - CSB



Fay Bolin
Fundraising
Committee



Peggy Lodewyk
Fundraising
Committee



OPEN
Fundraising
Committee



OPEN
Fundraising
Committee



OPEN
Fundraising
Committee

May 1, 2025

AAUW Newsletter Welcomes New Submissions

LATEST NEWS



**Do you have a special
announcement or event you
would like to share with all the
AAUW St. Cloud Area (MN)**

Branch members?

**Want it included in our next
Monthly Newsletter??**

**SEND YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS
AND EVENT DETAILS WITH
PHOTOS TO JAMIE SWENSON
JAMIE_2992@YAHOO.COM
BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH TO BE
INCLUDED IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER.**

Disclaimer: There is no guarantee that your information
will be shared but we will do our best to get it shared in
the following newsletter.

