

September 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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Branch Update(s)

SCSU Student Organization

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AAUW State & National

And More...

We have big news to report from your Board. First of all, we had a wonderful gathering last night at the Martini Lounge. It was great to see everyone again and get ready for the upcoming AAUW season.

Get ready for a wild and crazy program season. We've fiddled with meeting dates, locations, and costs, so please pay close attention to the info - here in your Monthly Monitor, or on our website.

We are having three "field trip" programs this year:

September - Stearns History Museum

January - Great River Children's Museum

March - Judicial Speaker, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Gorecki Center

For each of these field trips, we will be charging only \$10 per program. We are asking that you make your reservation before the 7-days-prior deadline, using our online system as usual. However, please make payments by mailing a check directly to Mary Harlander-Locke (730 14<sup>th</sup> Ave So. St. Cloud, MN 56301), or make payment at either the program before or after the event.

We are deep into planning for our October Fundraiser. This year's theme is "Something Magic" and we already know that you'll enjoy it tremendously. Prices are staying the same: Admission = \$74, Raffle Tickets = \$10 each or 12 for \$100. The Fall Buffet menu will be scrumptious: Maple Dijon Chicken, Roasted Red Bliss Potatoes, Roasted Asparagus, Dinner Rolls with Honey Butter, Pumpkin Mousse, and Apple Spice Cake. Yummy! Get your tickets by sending a check to Mary Harlander-Locke or paying her at the September meeting.

Our biggest announcement, which will also shortly be coming out in an email to all members, is that we are unable to run our Tech Savvy event this season. Many of our workshop presenters have been laid off, and our chief professor who coordinates rooms, student volunteers and workshops has had her workload doubled. In addition, our corporate sponsors are no longer able to assist - primarily because our contacts who have contributed so much effort in the past have gone on to take other jobs, which prevent them from helping us. We have reached out to other organizations but cannot find anyone will to pick up and organize a Tech Savvy event this year. It's very sad, but we know that things change.

As an alternative, we are considering two options:

1. Create a process to give grants to Middle School teachers in the STEM fields to allow them to purchase supplies and necessary items for STEM teaching.
2. Create a process to provide scholarships to STEM students (similar to our process for funding Scholarships for Young Leaders).

I know this is a shocking and sad announcement, but as you can see we are looking forward to providing a replacement project, in order to continue supporting female STEM students. Do please give us your feedback regarding these changes and let us know your thoughts.

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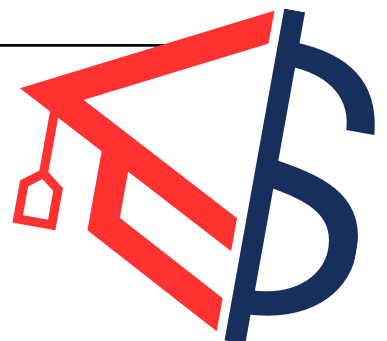
## Scholarship Announcements

# AY26 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED



### Scholarship Recipient

Name	Major
<i>Maria S.</i>	<i>Political Science/Pre-Law</i>
<i>Sarina K.</i>	<i>Finance and Information Systems</i>
<i>Javelia M.</i>	<i>Cybersecurity</i>
<i>Aditi D.</i>	<i>Information Systems</i>
<i>Angie M.</i>	<i>Biochemistry/Pre-dentistry</i>
<i>Abigail R.</i>	<i>Nursing</i>
<i>Twila L.</i>	<i>Chemistry</i>
<i>Alyssa S.</i>	<i>Global Business</i>

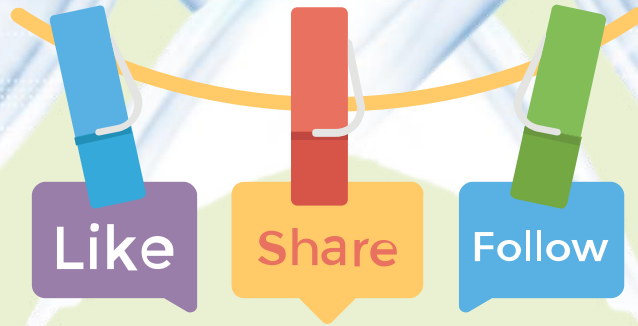


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## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



**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](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!



## 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](mailto: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?





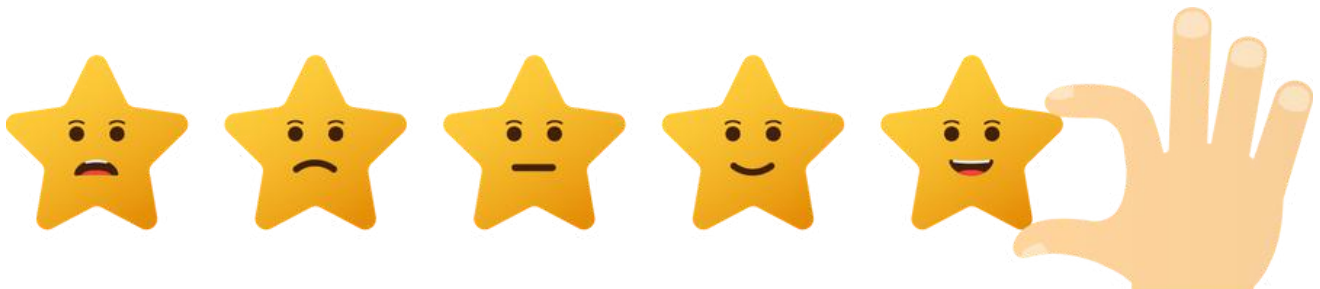
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## Member Feedback



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](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 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, Treasurer



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AAUW Student Organization at SCSU

**The SCSU AAUW Student Organization will be tabling at both the Mainstreet Involvement Fair and the Annual Founders Day Picnic to increase visibility on campus and recruit new student members.**



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## AAUW Student Organization at SCSU



**SCSU AAUW Student  
Organization Is  
Hosting A...**

**EQUITY  
REQUIRES  
ACCESS**

# FOOD DRIVE

**HAPPENING IN  
DECEMBER**  
MORE INFO TO COME

**1 of 3**

of Huskies report  
worrying about having  
enough food

**30%**

of Huskies' academics  
were impacted by food  
insecurity

**300**

Huskies served each  
week



### **Drop-off Location:**

College of Education and  
Learning Design Dean's  
Office (SH 365) or Herberger  
Business School Dean's  
Office (CH 118)



### **Have Questions?**

Maria 320-295-6992 or  
Adit 763-286-2051

**LAST DAY TO DROP  
OFF DONATIONS**

**12/05/2025**

**Thing you can bring to  
contribute the food drive**



**Canned  
Food**



**Hygiene  
Essentials**



**Check  
or  
Cash**

Learn more

[www.stcloudstate.com/huskiesfoodpantry](http://www.stcloudstate.com/huskiesfoodpantry)



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# 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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## 2025-2026 Programs



**09/15/2025.** Ann Marie Johnson. Field trip to Stearns History Museum & St. Cloud Municipal Band Concert 3:30 pm

Join Stearns History Museum executive director, Amy Degerstrom, at 3:30 pm on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, for a guided tour of Stearns County's nationally accredited museum and research facility. Explore the exhibits, learn what's available for research in the archives, and get a special look behind the scenes at the museum's collections care spaces. The tour will give you a chance to find out more about the work that goes into caring for and sharing Stearns County history.

Following the tour, the museum closes at 5 pm. Bring your own picnic food and enjoy a picnic outside, while waiting for the free concert at 6:30 pm by the St. Cloud Municipal Band. Picnic tables are available on the east side of the museum between the parking lot and the building.

The concert will be held on museum grounds so be sure to bring a blanket or chair. Questions? Contact Ann Marie at [development@stearns-museum.org](mailto:development@stearns-museum.org) or call 320/253-8424, ext. 106.

**10/07/2025** Annual Fundraiser SCSU Atwood Room. 5:00 pm

**11/11/2025.** Kathryn Gainey. Charlie Curtis, Director, SCSU LGBT Resource Center. Transgender, the new Other. SCSU Alumni Room. 5:00 pm

Over 900 laws have been introduced across the nation targeting the rights of transgender people. Why are these laws being introduced? Approximately 1% of the population identify as transgender. Are transgenders a threat to the other 99%? When the rights of some are taken away, the rights of all are in danger.

**FOOD** Buffet Meal: Hors d'oeuvres, cookies, cheese

**12/09/2025.** Debra Carlson. SCSU Student Organization Panel. SCSU Alumni Room. 5:00 pm

Join us for a meaningful evening hosted by the SCSU AAUW Student Organization, focused on equity, access, and supporting college students in need.

The program will include:

- A brief presentation introducing the AAUW Student Organization history, goals, current needs and how the AAUW Saint Cloud Branch can best support their efforts.
- The presentation will also highlight the issue of food insecurity on campus. As part of the program, a food drive will be held to support the Huskies Food Pantry initiative. Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable food and toiletry items to benefit the SCSU Huskies Food Pantry
- The presentation will be followed by a student panel made up of 2-4 SCSU AAUW student organization members who will answer questions about the student members personal campus experiences, and the challenges they face.

Together, we can ensure that every SCSU student has access to the resources they need to thrive.

**FOOD** Buffet Meal: Hors d'oeuvres, cookies, cheese

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## 2025-2026 Programs

**01/22/2026** (Thursday 5:00 pm) Laura Hood. *Great River Children's Museum Part 2*  
110 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. South, St. Cloud

Join us for a fun and exciting tour of the Great River Children's Museum! Note the special day and time. Although we generally do a Saturday morning in January, that's the busiest day of the week for the Children's Museum.

AAUW members will be provided an exclusive tour of the newly opened Great River Children's Museum located in downtown St. Cloud. Executive Director Cassie Miles and leadership team will present on the recent launch of this successful and important museum for children and the young at heart.

Then.....

*We are within walking distance of Kohinoor Bar and Grill (Indian food)*

17 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. S

Or

*The Olde Brick House* 102 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.

Or

*Arroy Thai & Filipino Restaurant* 800 W St. Germain St.

**02/14/2026** (Saturday 10:00 am). Christine Lepkowski. Artificial Intelligence. SCSU Alumni room.

### **Artificial Intelligence: What You Need to Know**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already shaping the way we live, work, and study every day, often in ways we don't even realize. This presentation will explore how AI is embedded in the tools we use, the opportunities it brings, and the ethical and practical issues we all need to understand and consider. Join us for an engaging and accessible conversation about how AI is transforming our world.

FOOD: Continental Breakfast

**03/10/2026**. CSB. Whitney Court. Judicial speaker 204 Gorecki Center

We will have the honor of having a Judiciary Leadership Guest Speaker join us for the evening to discuss leadership during times of change and uncertainty, experiences overcoming personal and professional obstacles, and to provide encouragement and advice for emerging young female leaders.

**04/14/2026**. Caroline Williams. Planetarium Presentation. SCSU Planetarium. 6:00 pm (Park after 6; it's cheaper) check-in & appetizers 6:00-6:45; program 6:45-8:00 pm. Map for parking & Planetarium to follow.

Dave Williams has taught astronomy for over 50 years. He was the Planetarium Director at SCSU overseeing the planetarium renovation with the GOTO Chronos projector. This projector shows over 8,500 stars giving a brilliant star field showing the Milky Way, planets, star clusters, and galaxies.

Dave retired just 2 years ago and is the husband of Caroline Williams. The current planetarium director allows him to give planetarium shows to special guests.

His presentation will highlight some of the significant contributions of women in astronomy, paired with a survey of the night sky along with constellations and ancient stories.

**FOOD** Buffet Meal: Hors d'oeuvres, cookies, cheese

**05/12/2026** (Lunch). Barb Wismer. Annual Business Meeting/Membership Appreciation/Program Planning/Travel Talkin'. A special travel presentation. CSB Gorecki Hall 11:00 am

We're going to try and speed through the business portion of our meeting so that we can enjoy a spirited and fun presentation from a pair of inveterate world travelers.

### ***Travel Talkin' (Intro from Laura Hood)***

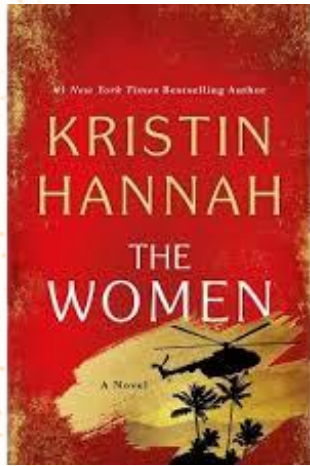
Local world travelers Jim Grubinski and Mike Smith will provide a presentation on one of their many foreign adventures. Beautiful pictures, delightful stories, fun facts, culture and history will be shared.

**FOOD** Sandwiches with chips and beverage



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## AAUW Book Clubs



The Thursday AAUW Book Club  
meets next on Thursday,  
September 25, 2025 @ 6:30p.m.  
to discuss "The Women" by  
Kristin Hannah.

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

### Note:

The AAUW's Wednesday  
Literature Group is on summer  
break.

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



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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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# AAUW State and National



I'd like to introduce myself — my name is Joi Ridley and I'm AAUW's new Senior Director of Communications and Marketing.

Today, I want to talk to you about how civil rights in education are under threat — and not just in higher ed. [From K–12 to college campuses, students are being denied the protections they deserve.](#)

## [What AAUW is doing:](#)

At this critical moment for civil rights in education, AAUW is rising to meet the challenge — guided by our 2025 strategic priorities:

### 1. **Funding Higher Education**

- Providing fellowships and grants to women from underserved communities and underrepresented fields like STEM.
- Supporting women scholars and researchers, especially in higher education.

### 2. **Removing Barriers to Success**

- Defending Title IX and civil rights laws that guarantee inclusive, safe, and accessible educational environments for all students — from K–12 to higher education.

### 3. **Strengthening AAUW's Reach**

- Evaluating and improving our engagement strategies to grow organizational sustainability and member-driven action.



In solidarity,

**Joi C. Ridley**  
Senior Director, Communications and Marketing

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## AAUW of Hawai'i



### 2025 Issue Forums (Is DEI a Dirty Word?)



**Moderator:** Younghee Overly, AAUW Hawaii board, AAUW national public policy co-chair

**Speakers:**

- Andrea Freeman, Second Century Chair at Southwestern Law School and Professor at Richardson School of Law
- Elizabeth Fujiwara, Civil Rights and Employment Attorney in Hawai'i
- Avi Soifer, former Dean of Richardson School of Law

Learn about the impact of recent attacks on DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and potential ways YOU can get involved.

Email [publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net](mailto:publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net) if you have questions.

Tuesday September 9<sup>th</sup> NOON via Zoom  
(go to <https://tinyurl.com/hawaiiidei> OR use the QR code to register)

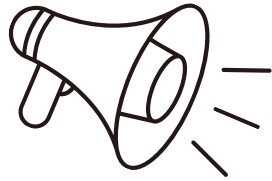


**RSVP for Sept 9th Issue Forum on DEI**



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## 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](mailto: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.