

October 1, 2025

THE MONTHLY MONITOR

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



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

IN THIS ISSUE

Memo From The Board

Branch Update(s)

SCSU Student Organization

Events/Programs

Book Clubs

AAUW State & National

And More...

Hello all, hope you're as excited about our Fundraiser as I am! It's going to be such fun – dinner, musical entertainment, raffle prizes – and good company! The Board reviewed and discussed all our plans – it's going to be a blast! Hope to see you there.

We had an absolutely marvelous September meeting. The “behind-the-scenes” tour of the Stearns History Museum was so informative! We really learned a lot, especially about the processes the museum has to go through in accepting or removing donated items. See the article elsewhere in this month's Monitor.

There have been some questions raised as to why we continue to charge a \$10 entry fee for programs where we don't serve food (such as the September meeting, and our field trip to the Great River Children's Museum on January 22, 2026). We are applying that money towards sponsorship of student meals at our events. With eight Scholarship members and an active SCSU Student Organization, we are using those funds. Note: we have enough for the students attending the Fundraiser, but after that we will be needing to ask for more sponsorship.

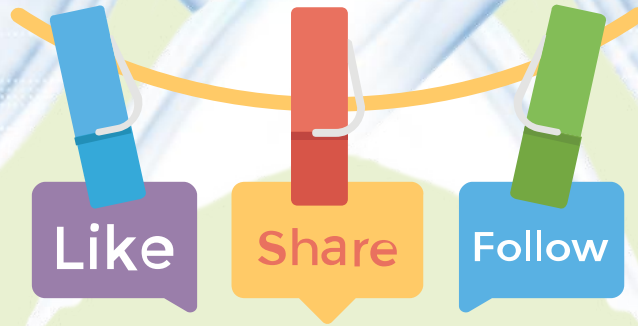
I'd like to take this moment to thank Joyce Hummel, Kathryn Gainey, and Fay Bolin for all their hard work in planning this year's Fundraiser. I know you will enjoy the results of their efforts next Tuesday.

October 1, 2025

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?



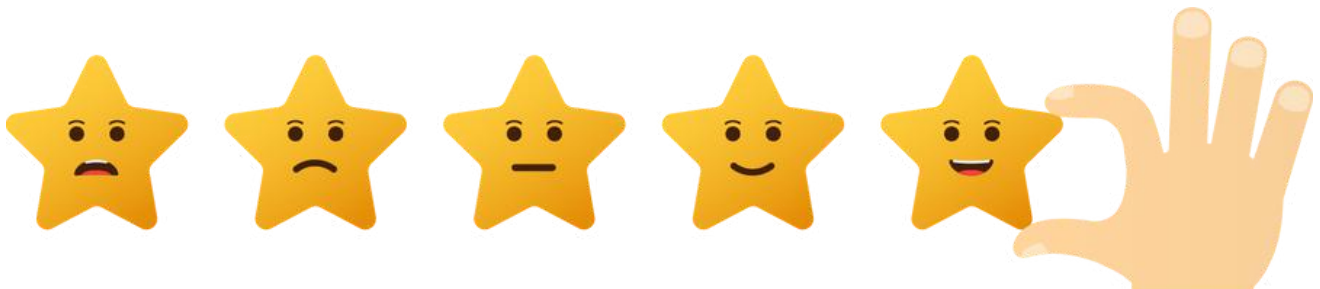
October 1, 2025

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 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!



October 1, 2025

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

October 1, 2025

AAUW Student Organization at SCSU at the Mainstreet Involvement Fair 9/10/2025



October 1, 2025

AAUW Student Organization at SCSU at the CoELD Founders Day Picnic 9/15/2025



October 1, 2025

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

October 1, 2025

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.**

October 1, 2025

October Fundraiser



AAUW Annual Fundraiser 2025

SOMETHING
MAGIC

Together, we create magic!!



October 7, 2025

SCSU Cascade Ballroom, AMC

5:30 pm Dinner, Entertainment, Raffle Prizes

Admission Tickets \$75 Raffle Tickets \$10 or 12 for \$100

To RSVP: email aauwsaintcloud@gmail.com or
send check to P.O. Box 7694 St. Cloud, MN 56302

Questions: Call Joyce 320-224-5086

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN (AAUW)
SAINT CLOUD AREA MN BRANCH
SUPPORTING GENDER EQUITY AND FEMALE EDUCATION
IN ST. CLOUD SINCE 1822.



October 1, 2025

September Program Review



Our September 15th program at the Stearns County History Museum was a wonderful experience for all who attended.

Our tour guide was Amy Degerstrom, Executive Director of the Museum, and she gave us lots of inside information about how the museum deals with artifacts and what they might need in terms of donations. We learned so much, and gained a new appreciation for all the museum does for our community.



After the tour we gathered at the picnic tables outside the museum to eat our lunches that we packed and brought with us. Been a while since I've packed a lunch!

We moved our chairs up in front of the bandshell and just enjoyed the soft summer evening (didn't feel like September at all.)

There was a nice cool breeze which was welcomed after the heat of the day. The St. Cloud Municipal Band concert was wonderful and we all enjoyed it so much.

If you were able to join us, hope you had a good time and, if not, we missed you!



October 1, 2025

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 15th, 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 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

October 1, 2025

2025-2026 Programs

01/22/2026 (Thursday 5:00 pm) Laura Hood. *Great River Children's Museum Part 2*
110 8th 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 7th Ave. S

Or

The Olde Brick House 102 6th 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. The St. Cloud State student chapter of Women in CyberSecurity (WiCyS) will be presenting an exploration of 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.

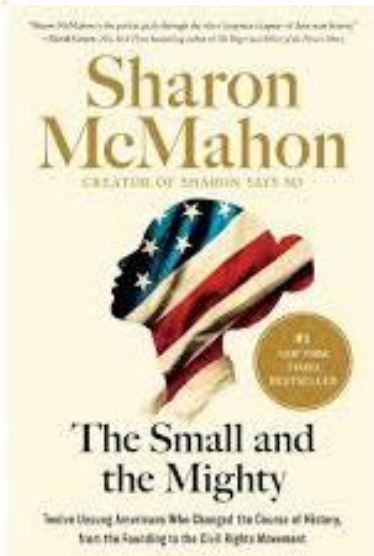
Travel Talkin' (Intro from Laura Hood)

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

October 1, 2025

AAUW Book Clubs



The Thursday AAUW Book Club meets next on Thursday, October 23, 2025 @ 6:30p.m. to discuss “The Small & Mighty” by Sharon McMahon.

Hosted by: Diane

AAUW members can contact Mary Harlander-Locke if they are interested in joining.

The Wednesday AAUW Book Club meets next on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 @ 1:00p.m. to discuss “Go Went Gone” by Jenny Erpenbeck.

Hosted by: Judith Nixon Hook

Presenter: Connie Crane

AAUW members can contact Mary Harlander-Locke if they are interested in joining.



October 1, 2025

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

October 1, 2025

AAUW in the Press

PRESS RELEASES

Pay Gap Data Shows Women Falling Behind; AAUW Steps Up with Solutions

WASHINGTON, D.C. — AAUW is disappointed to see the newly released U.S. Census Bureau data showing that the gender pay gap has widened for the second consecutive year. In 2024, all women working full-time, year-round were paid 81 cents, and all earners (including part-time and seasonal workers) were paid 76 cents for every dollar paid to men. In annual income, women were paid \$57,520, compared to \$71,090 paid to men. This is not a minor fluctuation but a statistically significant setback that underscores a troubling trend: women working full time are falling further behind.

“For the second year in a row, Census data shows the gender pay gap is widening — proof that inequities in the workplace are not going away on their own,” says AAUW CEO Gloria L. Blackwell. “Yet instead of addressing this crisis, this Administration is doing the opposite: systematically dismantling the very protections meant to ensure workplace equity. Women are being told, in no uncertain terms, that their rights and opportunities are expendable.” The data shows a grim reality and disparity across racial and ethnic groups when compared to non-Hispanic white men:

- Latinas working full time, year-round were paid 58 cents on the dollar, and only 54 cents when including all earners.
- Black women earned 65 cents full time, but just 63 cents overall.
- White women received 77 cents full time, and 73 cents overall.
- Asian American women, the closest to parity, earned 96 cents full time and 85 cents across all earners.

Stronger federal protections from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, robust immigration safeguards, and the Department of Labor’s Women’s Bureau provide essential support, but lasting change requires congressional action to strengthen workplace protections and advance pay equity at a structural level.

“At AAUW, we refuse to let women be sidelined by inaction,” Blackwell continues. Through our Virtual Economic Empowerment Trainings, we provide training that helps women strengthen their salary negotiation skills, advocate for better benefits, and position themselves for advancement. While the pay gap can’t be negotiated away, we can empower women to demand more — and to claim the opportunities they deserve.”

AAUW emphasized that while individual women cannot negotiate away systemic disparities, the organization is supporting individual women with the tools and resources they need to help negotiate their salaries for higher pay. Through its economic empowerment salary negotiation trainings, women learn strategies to strengthen their position when seeking fair pay and benefits. AAUW Start Smart is specifically designed for college women entering the job market, teaching effective salary negotiation techniques to boost confidence and negotiation skills. The first Work Smart training session of the fall will be held on September 16, with additional sessions to follow. Register here.

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AAUW (American Association of University Women) is the nation’s leading organization for equity in higher education and women’s economic empowerment.

Founded in 1881 by women who defied society’s conventions by earning college degrees, AAUW has since worked to increase women’s access, opportunity, and equity in higher education through research, advocacy, and philanthropy of over \$146 million, supporting thousands of women scholars. Learn more at aauw.org.

October 1, 2025

Message From Tremayne Parquet



What Women Lose

When women lose access to education, they lose opportunity, economic security, and equity. These challenges are even greater for women from marginalized backgrounds, which is why we are so proud of AAUW's support of these communities.



67%

Fellows are
women of
color



54%

International
Fellows are
women of color



65%

Identify as
single parents