

January 1, 2026

# 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...

Hello all and hope you had wonderful holidays! This is a brief preview of notes from your Board, as we didn't have our regularly-scheduled Board meeting on December 30th. I believe you can guess why we didn't have a meeting during the week between Christmas and New Years!

We had a wonderful Fundraiser Event at Panera in December. We won't know how much we made until Panera does the figures and sends Mary a check. We'll announce it when we know.

We have registered a group to attend the Brainerd branch's fundraiser, the Brain Buster trivia competition. We have a full table of six, but if more want to attend, please contact me and our Branch will fund the registration fee for you.

So looking ahead to this year, I think we have a very exciting program season ahead of us. . . a field trip to the Children's Museum (January), a program about AI (February), a Judicial Speaker (March), and a Planetarium Presentation (April). Since our December program (a panel from our SCSU Student Organization and donations to the Husky Pantry) had to be canceled due to bad weather, we are hoping to either re-schedule as a special meeting, or wrap it into another one of our programs. It depends on the students' availability and we'll let you all know when it's rescheduled. And, of course, we'll have our regular Branch Business Meeting in May, including Member Appreciation, Upcoming Program Suggestions and Voting, as well as Branch voting on the new Board of Directors.

Yes, your entire Board has a term ending date of June 30, 2026, so we have to nominate and vote in a full Board for the coming two years. Since many are choosing to step down, we need folks to step up! Please see the Board flyer in this issue of the Monthly Monitor, and please use the online Nomination form. We need to vote on the new board at our May meeting, so we have to get going on this!

I will be sending you updated Position Descriptions this month, and we are hoping that you will volunteer to play your part as a Branch Board Member. We've worked really hard to make sure that all positions have been streamlined and will not require very much time. Stay tuned for more Board News!

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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



**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. 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



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## 2025-2026 Programs



**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

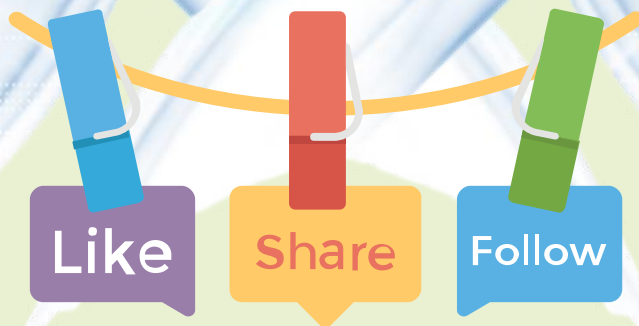


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## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



**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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## AAUW Book Clubs



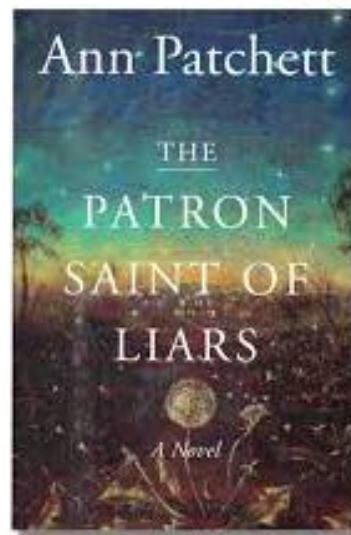
The Thursday AAUW Book Club meets next on Thursday, January 15, 2026 @ 6:30p.m. to discuss “The Stolen Lady” by Laura Morelli.

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

The Wednesday AAUW Book Club meets next on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 @ 1:00p.m. to discuss “Patron Saint of Liars” by Ann Patchett

Hosted by: Mary Lou Lenz & Bonita

Presenter: Mary Lou Lenz  
AAUW members can contact Mary Harlander-Locke if they are interested in joining.



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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 |
|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 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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# SCSU AAUW Student Organization

## 2025-26 Programs

09/16/2025 Field trip to Stearns History Museum & St. Cloud Municipal Band Concert

10/07/2025 Annual Fundraiser

11/11/2025 Transgender, the new Other

12/09/2025 SCSU Student Organization Panel & Food Drive

01/22/2026 Field trip to the new Children's Museum

02/14/2026 Artificial Intelligence

03/10/2026 Judicial speaker

04/14/2026 Planetarium Presentation

05/12/2026 Annual Business Meeting/Membership Appreciation/Program Planning/Travel Talkin'



Mainstreet 2025



Campus Engagement



Questions? Call or Email us today...



763-286-2051

320-295-6992



aditi.dhakal@go.mnstate.edu

maria.shavers@go.stcloudstate.edu

## JOIN US



SCSU Student Organization &  
Saint Cloud Area (MN) Branch



2025-26 Scholarship Recipients

## Why AAUW???

- Scholarship Opportunities ✓
- Flash Funds ✓
- Sense of Belonging ✓
- Leadership Experience ✓
- Friendships ✓
- Continued Education ✓
- and more.... ✓

**Our Mission: AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through education, research, and advocacy.**

## JOIN US TODAY

For More Information  
<https://stcloud-mn.aauw.net>





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# AAUW MN State Meeting

**The 97<sup>th</sup> AAUW of MINNESOTA STATE MEETING**

**April 24-25, 2026, Brainerd Lakes Area**

**Ruttger's Bay Lake Resort**

***"Growing Together: Rooted in Strength"***



## **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

+

***AAUW of Minnesota Needs You!***

***Get on Board!***

Consider joining the AAUW Minnesota State Board - an enjoyable group who gets things accomplished! Share your talents by joining this team effort to implement the AAUW mission.

We are seeking candidates to serve on the 2026-2028 state board of directors for the following positions and for the Nominating Committee for 2027 Elections:

- Vice President for Membership, 2026-2028
- Vice President for AAUW Fund, 2026-2028
- Secretary/Historian, 2026-2028
- Nominating Committee, 2026-2027 for 2027 elections (3 members and 1 alternate)

The members of the Nominating Committee are Mary Schwanke, Owatonna Branch, Barb Wonson Liukkonen, Ely Branch and AAUW MN VP Funds, and Teresa Sagen, Ely Branch and AAUW MN Administrative Assistant and Finance Chair. Please feel free to contact any nominating committee member if you have questions or contact board members who currently hold the position in which you are interested at [aauwminn@gmail.com](mailto:aauwminn@gmail.com)

All you need to apply is a strong belief in the mission of AAUW and a willingness to learn and grow. Rewards for state service include leadership development, camaraderie and teamwork with other leaders. **An applicant may be self-nominated, nominated by your branch or branch board of directors, or any individual.**

Nominations are open until **January 30**. The nominating committee will present a slate of candidates to the membership by email no later than February 25, 2026 (60 days prior to AAUW MN state meeting).

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## AAUW Brainerd MN Branch

*Save the Date!*

January 17, 2026  
First Lutheran Church  
424 S. 8<sup>th</sup> St.  
Brainerd, MN  
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm



Contact Barb to Register: 616-206-867



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## Call for Nominations for St. Cloud Branch Board

### Call for Nominations – Board Positions Opening July 2026

Our branch thrives because of dedicated members who lead, inspire, and help drive our mission forward. As we approach the end of the current board cycle, we are seeking nominations for several open leadership positions beginning July 2026.

#### ★ Open Positions Include:

- President
- Recording Secretary
- Recording Secretary (Alternate)
- VP of Communications
- VP of Finance
- VP of Programs
- Website Manager (Alternate)
- Newsletter Editor
- ...and more!



If you have a passion for equity, leadership, advocacy, and supporting women and students in our community, we encourage you to consider stepping into one of these roles or nominating someone who would be a great fit.

#### ★ How to Submit Nominations

You may nominate yourself or another member using the nomination survey below:

👉 <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xscRULQKq0ae9PrnSplaf5RktXxfSlBPjGFdg5-tH5BUNUtWVlM2TDVGVEkzWUQyQU9JNzJGMkJZRC4u>

#### 💡 Why Serve?

- Strengthen our mission and impact
- Build leadership skills
- Connect with a network of passionate advocates
- Support our student organization and community partners
- Help shape the direction of the branch for years to come

#### **Deadline for Nominations:**

Monday, May 25, 2026

We appreciate your willingness to lead, support, and inspire.

Our strength comes from members like YOU.

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## Board Member Position Descriptions



### AAUW Saint Cloud Branch Board of Directors *Position Descriptions*

#### **Voting Members**

The **President**, as the official representative of the Affiliate, shall preside over all programs, meetings, and public events including but not limited to the monthly Board of Directors meetings, executive committee meetings, and represent the Affiliate at the AAUW Minnesota State Convention.

- Schedules, conducts, and creates agenda for monthly Board meetings, held the last Tuesday of every month, September – May.
- The Branch President, the Vice President of Finance, and one Board member shall be responsible for writing the annual budget
- The President oversees planning for the next season's programs and program chairs.
- The President assists in planning the Annual Fundraiser, along with the Fundraiser Committee.
- The President sends out reservation deadline reminders for each program, and creates the Reservation Register for each program meeting.

The **President-Elect**, or **Co-President**, assists the President in all duties and services, and serves as President at the end of the current term.

The **Vice President for Finance** serves as custodian of all funds, securities, business papers, and manages IRS status compliance and State registration for the Affiliate known as the Saint Cloud Area (MN) Branch. The VP Finance shall:

- Keep an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements, in both QuickBooksOnline and Excel.
- Submit a financial report monthly to the Board of Directors.
- Monitor the Branch's P. O. Box in Waite Park
- In December, re-register the Corporation with the State of Minnesota
- In December, renew the Branch's Liability Insurance with AHT Insurance
- In early June, form the budget committee.
- In early July, at the end of the fiscal year (6/30), file the 990-N postcard with the IRS and create the Archives items for the fiscal year. Set up file folders for the months of the upcoming fiscal year.

The **Finance Assistant** assists the Vp for Finance at meetings with payment collection and registration, along with balancing and reporting at the request of the VP Finance. This is a non-voting position.

The **Recording Secretary** shall record minutes of the Affiliate at the Board of Directors meetings and promptly submit them for approval to the Board via email.



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## Board Member Position Descriptions



### AAUW Saint Cloud Branch Board of Directors *Position Descriptions*

The **Alternate Recording Secretary** shall fulfill the duties of the Recording Secretary for every Board of Directors meeting for which the Recording Secretary is unable to attend. The Alternate will also be responsible for creating, distributing and collecting the ID badges and lanyards at every month program meeting.

The **Vice President for Membership** shall make and record the dues payments on the AAUW website, forward dues payments to the VP Finance, and assist members with renewals as needed. Will also provide roster information and regular reports to the Board of Directors.

The **Vice President for Public Policy** shall report to the Board regarding national and state matters concerning AAUW's mission, and is responsible for reporting any State communications to the Branch as needed.

**Monthly Program Chairwomen** shall secure and coordinate a program speaker, describe the planned program for use in advertising the program, and introduce the speaker at the Program meeting. Each program chair has submitted ideas for upcoming programs at the May monthly meeting. **Monthly Program Chairwomen** are voting members of the Board of Directors.

The **Social Chairwomen** will coordinate facilities, catering, and registration for the monthly Program Meetings, held September through May. This includes initial arrangements for the scheduled meetings (held on the second Tuesday of each month), and communicating reservation counts to Catering for each meeting. Social Chairwomen also create the program registration check-in form, gathering data from the [aauwsaintcloud@gmail.com](mailto:aauwsaintcloud@gmail.com) email (userid: [aauwsaintcloud@gmail.com](mailto:aauwsaintcloud@gmail.com); password: AAUWStCloud6032). Reservation names are added to the standard Registration form, arranged alphabetically, and copied to the Finance VP for check-ins and Kathryn Gainey for the ID badges. The reservation count is used to advise Chartwells Catering of the expected number of attendees. Social Chairs at the program will personally greet new members and guests, and help ensure that the Speaker has all this is needed for the program.

The **Vice President of Communications** shall lead and support the Communications Team, all of whom are voting members of the Board of Directors. This team consists of:

- **Website Administrator**
- **Monthly Newsletter (The Monitor) Publisher**
- **Social Media Poster**
- **Meet-a-Member Writer**
- **Branch Directory Collation and Currency** (including updates to the National roster)
- **Branch Marketing & Advertising Creator**

The **College/University Representative** will serve as a member of the membership committee, and as the liaison of AAUW to retain and develop potential college/university memberships. The

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## Board Member Position Descriptions



### AAUW Saint Cloud Branch Board of Directors *Position Descriptions*

position facilitates and assists with the renewal of C/U affiliation annually, and will communicate the concerns of the college/university representatives to the Branch Board of Directors.

Each member of the board of directors should be prepared to sign a Conflict of Interest policy, annually

The **Financial Review Chair** conducts an annual financial review of the VP Finance records for the previous fiscal year. This Chair is a Board member, and the review will include additional Branch members. This review will occur in the Fall succeeding the close of the previous fiscal year.

The **Archivist** is responsible for gathering and delivering our documents to the Archives at SCSU on a yearly basis (generally after the end of the previous fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup>, and once the annual Financial Review has been conducted).

Items to be included for each fiscal year's package:

- All Board Minutes\* (secured from the **Recording Secretary**)
- List of Board Members (secured from the **Recording Secretary**)
- All Monthly News Bulletins\* (secured from the **Vice President of Communications**)
- Major project documents – summarized and dated including any pictures, fliers, brochures, etc. (secured from the **Committee Chairs** for each event)
- Financial Summary for the year (secured from the Vice President for Finance)
- Directory or Branch Roster (secured from the **Vice President of Communications**)

\*Items marked with an asterisk can be digital and stored on a thumb drive.

### Non-Voting Members

The following persons attend meetings of the Branch Board of Directors and provide timely reports, but are non-voting positions. They are held as Committee Chairwomen, in order to facilitate and support the events and programs sponsored and funded by the AAUW Saint Cloud Area Branch. These crucial positions are meant to be leaders who do not hold sole responsibility for the event. The positions are:

- **Annual Fundraiser Committee**
- **Scholarships for Young Leaders Chairs (one for each C/U affiliate)**
- **Flash Funds Chairwoman**



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**AAUW Newsletter Welcomes New Submissions**

**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.**