

BADGER BRIEFS



May, 2025

Spring Issue

Badger Brief Spring 2025 President's Message Deb Thiel

Our AAUW Wisconsin Convention 2025 was outstanding!

Congratulations to District 4. Thank you for all the hard work to make it happen. My only disappointment is that most of us weren't able to share the experience. The quality and messaging from our speakers, the building of themes with doable actions, passing inspiring resolutions, showcasing locally owned women's bakery enterprises and even appreciating the unique driftless area of Wisconsin were all valuable. Through your generosity we raised over \$5000 for the greatest needs fund. The opportunity to meet both old and new AAUW friends to talk about what's important, priceless! The standing ovation to Sarah McBride's recorded message during our business meeting brought tears to my eyes.



Communing with others who care about equity and education; and who willingly spend their time and energy raising up other women and girls, both invigorating and inspiring, is what belonging to AAUW is all about! Through our relationships we can do much to advocate and fight for a just society that recognizes, values and lifts us all. We respect all colors, races, religions, identities, and socio-economic backgrounds. Collectively we are an array of skills, temperaments, views, and values which inspire us in various ways. We value and learn from our differences! In this ever-chaotic world, our different ideas and approaches to action will broaden and strengthen us when we serve in complimentary and coordinated ways.

When you join AAUW you are not just a member, you also belong. We don't need to judge each other – there is plenty of that in the outside world. We are part of each other's support network. Though we are non-partisan we should be political and fight for the policies we believe in. When wearing your AAUW hat, focus on AAUW issues and display AAUW ethics, i.e., non-partisan, treat others with respect and dignity, free from discrimination, harassment or disrespectful behavior. We work to listen, promote fact-based information, and serve as a voice of reason. That's a tall order everyday – but striving is the way to achieve better. I certainly have not achieved paragon status, but I try most days. We each wear many hats and belong to multiple groups, so feel free to expand your activism! Bridging with other groups will only strengthen our individual and collective voices.

We need 'all hands-on deck'. So, I ask you to take time to consider what you are willing and able to offer our cause. This could be as simple as engaging the 2-minute activist and communicating with

your legislators, fundraising for scholarships, staying engaged and current with AAUW toolkits/workshops, sharing with others and much more. There is a ton of info coming from AAUW National these days, so be alert! Check out National Policy's first 100 days fact sheet .

https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/files/2025/05/AAUW_First_100_Days_Fact_Sheet.pdf.

Closely follow AAUW Strategic Plan kick off on May 13!

AAUW National is excited to announce the launch of AAUW's new strategic plan, reaffirming our commitment to advancing equity for women and girls through education. AAUW was founded more than 140 years ago with this mission, and with the unprecedented attacks we're seeing on higher education, we believe it is more important than ever to focus our efforts in this area. AAUW's strength lies in our collective power — our states, branches, and members are the heart of our grassroots movement. States and branches provide meaningful local support for women and girls, and for the policies that matter to their communities. The Five-Star Program provides a framework for branches to align with AAUW's strategic priorities, reinforcing a cohesive and collective approach to advocacy, community engagement, and financial sustainability. When AAUW National and our branches work in alignment, we maximize our collective resources, influence, and success to break down barriers for women in education and beyond.



Kleo Baruth Kritz, State Program VP/Convention Co-Chair, and **Maggie Winz**, Local Arrangements Co-Chair, will be organizing Convention 2026. They are already contemplating..... what to do to make Convention 2026 even better!!

“FORWARD WISCONSIN: BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE,”

Kleo Baruth Kritz

“The wonderful camaraderie of all members, no matter if I knew them or not.” This statement made on the post-convention survey reflected the attitude of many attendees at Convention 2025. Another member commented, “The many available options of activities and speakers, the networking, inspiration, education and empowerment.” And yes, our planning committee thanks all 91 of our attendees who responded with written comments to the convention and we have over six solid pages of what you particularly liked and what you are suggesting for next year.

Keynote speaker Amanda Goodenough, an educator and consultant, inspired many of us with her “Welcome to the Struggle.....” which merited many positive comments from the 118 people who attended the convention. And in today’s political climate in regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion, this is indeed a struggle and Amanda did a call to action with many members citing her speech as one of their favorite events at the convention.

Meghan Kissell, National AAUW Senior Director of Policy & Membership Advocacy, discussing National AAUW Public Policy in this difficult political environment with Stephanie Maloney the discussing WI Public Policy. In the lobby was a colorful Wall of Positive Thoughts on which attendees could write out thoughts on a sticky note and there was also a Box of Despair, which was black with a raven next to it, in which one could drop sticky notes, on what we are finding so depressing. (You will see them published here in our *Badger Briefs* and find them thoughtful.)

Two resolutions were passed:

- Constitution Amendment to Eliminate Big Money in Politics
- AAUW Resolution on Upholding the Civil Rights of American Who Identify as LGBTQ+

We were fortunate to have a 4-minute video prepared for our convention by Rep Sarah McBride of Delaware, who is the first trans woman in the National House of Representatives. She, too, received so many positive comments and do watch it:

<https://app.frame.io/presentations/784f1b06-ce25-4c28-8149-3dc09d195237>

Here is a copy of the program booklet.

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1wO6umMUIHs2Wdj6FkZQ9pjsBC_mzGWUE

All of the past programs are listed so scroll down to “2025 AAUW-WI Convention” and you can see the keynote and breakout speakers who spoke.

And remember next year District 1 will be hosting the convention. And yes, we will be reading and rereading the many suggestions made by you as we plan for next year! We hope you will join us.



Amanda Goodenough and Lynn Hillebrand past WI. AAUW president



Meghan Kissell National AAUW Senior Director of Policy & Membership



Lynda Drews, author



COMING NEXT YEAR!!

The Event: **AAUW WI STATE CONVENTION 2026**

The Hosts: **District 1 (Beaver Dam, Fort Atkinson, Janesville, and Monona/Madison)**

The Place: **DoubleTree by Hilton Madison East 4402 East Washington (opposite East Towne) (less than a mile west from I-90)**

The When: **April 17-18, 2026**

The Plan: **Put on your calendar now!**



\$! 2025 Convention Silent Auction! \$

AAUW-Wisconsin did it again! Our Silent Auction included 26 beautiful baskets donated by 20 of our branches. How wonderful to have such great participation! We also collected a pile of cash with our "Be a Lifesaver Tips Jar," plus a few sizeable checks from some generous donors.

As a result, we were able to send National just over \$5000 to support initiatives like economic empowerment programs, voter engagement campaigns, and policy advocacy. Our contribution helps ensure that AAUW "can amplify its impact, adapt to evolving needs, and continue leading the fight for gender equity." (Nat'l website)

Thank you, AAUW-Wisconsin members and branches, for making this year's fundraising effort a success.

Chris Taylor
State VP Fundraising



Rose Reinert donated 120 Cake Pops from Makes it Pop for the Sweet Suite in honor of her mother June Reinert, the La Crosse DEI chair and a member of the 2025 Planning Committee. June was responsible for getting Amanda Goodenough one of our main speakers.

Leadership VP Report

AAUW Wisconsin Questionnaire

AAUW WI surveys branches once every two years. The questionnaire was emailed to branch presidents(s) the week of May 11. The goal of the questionnaire is to learn more about our branches and how the state board can better serve branch officers. Please reply by Thursday, May 22. Your responses will help determine AAUW Wisconsin's goals and objectives for 2025-2026.

NCCWSL Update

After 39 years, AAUW is no longer hosting NCCWSL. It has been turned over to **NASPA**, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. It will still be held at the University of Maryland - College Park.

AAUW Wisconsin received two applications and selected both young ladies to receive a scholarship. However, both ladies decided not to attend.

Since the early bird price is still in effect, we reopened the application window. We currently have two more students who have applied.

Thank you to the selection committee: Chris Ebert, Jan Eriksen, Jean Kreul, and Kleo Baruth Kritz.

Reminders for Branch Presidents: Complete by June 30

- AAUW National Survey with questions about the Five Star Program
- Update branch officers/chairs for 2025-2026 in the Community Hub on the AAUW National website.
- Email the names of your branch officers/chairs for 2025-2026 to Erica Koonmen, AAUW WI Administrative Assistant moogs56@hotmail.com (include branch position, name, phone, email)
- Submit your branch bylaws (with required updates to articles I-VII based on the May 2023 election results) to AAUW WI Bylaws Chair, Sara Ramaker. Ramaker.sara@gmail.com

Carole Salinas, Leadership VP

AAUW District 1: Breakout at the Annual Convention

Consuelo Lopez, District Coordinator

As District 1 members met to share ideas, energy spread throughout the room. To grow and sustain our base, our branches will focus on visibility, community collaboration, information sharing, and increasing membership, especially among younger women (as we are an aging demographic). To attract new membership, we agreed volunteerism is very important. So, too, are welcoming environments for new members, expanding diversity initiatives, and leadership development. We'd like to share some great ideas:

Adopt a school, volunteer in groups, give membership packets to speakers, state your mission (equity for women and girls) in meetings and all public communication, do mission-driven programming, have an elevator speech, collaborate with other groups, and employ attractive websites and other publicity vehicles.



Announcement: Newly Elected Officers for FY25-26

Prepare to be inspired by the dynamic new leadership team of AAUW WI for the fiscal year 2025-26! Elected at our vibrant annual convention, these officers are set to usher in a wave of innovation and ambition.

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Terri Gulyas, included dedicated and talented members from across the state. We received invaluable input from many passionate individuals. Hats off to the committee for their exceptional work! Our committee members included:

- District 1 – Susan Slattery
- District 2 – Carol Montoto
- District 3 – Lisa Burczyk
- District 4 – Carol Robertson
- District 5 – Lisa Ubbelohde

A heartfelt thank you to everyone involved!

From a pool of highly qualified candidates, we proudly present those who will lead us into a future of excellence:

Newly Elected FY25-26 Officers

- President Elect: Carole Salinas (Janesville)
- VP Leadership: Jan Eriksen (La Crosse)
- VP Membership: Judy Hangartner (Sheboygan)

Continuing in Their Terms

- President: Deborah Thiel (Tomah)
- VP Finance: Chris Ebert (Northwoods)
- VP Programs: Kleo Baruth Kritz (Monona/Madison)

We eagerly anticipate the visionary leadership and vibrant energy these officers will bring to our organization in the upcoming year. Let's look forward to an era of growth, unity, and progress!



Carole Salinas, Judy Hangartner, Jan Eriksen, and Lynn Hildebrand



Wisconsin AAUW Board

Resolutions

At the 2025 AAUW WI Convention two Resolutions were passed. As with previous Resolutions these are intended to assist with program planning and AAUW WI initiatives.

In the next Badger Briefs look for information about Resolutions passed in previous years beginning with 2014.

1. AAUW Resolution on Upholding the Civil Rights of Americans who Identify as LGBTQ+

2. Constitutional Amendment to Eliminate Big Money in Politics.

Kathy Walsh
Resolution Chair

AAUW Wisconsin Resolution Constitutional Amendment to Eliminate Big Money in Politics

Whereas, AAUW National Public Policy Priorities oppose all forms of discrimination and support constitutional protection for the civil rights of all individuals, and

Whereas, AAUW National and AAUW WI both believe that AAUW must advocate for equity, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse society, and

Whereas, AAUW WI recognizes an obligation to advocate for campaign finance reform that will promote equitable representation and equitable participation, and

Whereas, AAUW WI believes free and fair elections are essential to democracy and effective self-governance, and

Whereas, interpretation of the U.S. Constitution by appointed Supreme Court Justices included corporations in the term “persons,” and

Whereas, in the 1976 *Buckley v. Valeo* ruling, the Supreme Court changed the course of American elections and established the doctrine that spending money to influence elections is a form of speech, and,

Whereas, on January 21, 2010, in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the Supreme Court overturned a century of precedence by ruling that corporate spending on elections cannot be limited under the First Amendment, and

Whereas, AAUW WI believes the above decisions (i.e., allowing corporations to act as persons to influence politics, that spending money is a form of speech, and allowing unlimited spending by corporations and wealthy donors) lead to the diminishing rights of individuals and inequitable representation in elections, and

Whereas, AAUW WI members recognize the need to engage in constructive acts to make a meaningful difference towards societal change, and

Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW WI will pledge to seek to reclaim democracy from the corrupting influence of unlimited political contributions and spending by standing with women across the country to support passage of an amendment to the United States Constitution stating:

1) Only human beings are endowed with constitutional rights – not corporations, unions, nonprofits or other artificial entities; and

2) Money is not speech, therefore limiting political contributions and spending is not equivalent to limiting speech.

AAUW Wisconsin Resolution Upholding the Civil Rights of Americans who Identify as LGBTQ+

Whereas, AAUW Public Policy Priorities advocate for freedom in definition of self and family, including protection from discrimination and a guarantee of civil rights for all family structures, and

Whereas, for too long the civil rights protections guaranteed to millions of Americans have been denied to those who identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and those identities who may not fit into the acronym), and

Whereas, no one shall be denied the full range of civil rights and liberties due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, and

Whereas, AAUW WI has the privilege and responsibility to acknowledge and uphold these principles for all citizens of Wisconsin, and

Whereas, unless and until LGBTQ+ people are able to enjoy the same rights and freedoms as their fellow Americans, the nation’s promise of equal justice under the law will remain unfilled, and

Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW WI will advocate for the full range of civil rights and liberties for all who identify as LGBTQ+. Such rights and liberties include freedom from discrimination in schools and the workplace, the guarantee of spousal/partner benefits – including the ability to care for dependent children, the ability to serve one's country in uniform, and the ability to serve as an elected official of the government.

Chris Ebert
AAUW Northwoods

Kudos to the Northwoods Branch for their DEI Focused Achievements

Since 2020 we have been charged to educate ourselves regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through our programming, projects, events and collaborations with other like-minded organizations. At our monthly WI State DEI Committee drop-in meetings branch DEI chairs and presidents have shared what has worked for them such as DEI book titles and authors that generated conversations in their branches with some encouraging community read programs. All of our state conventions have focused on DEI topics and resolutions.

In 2023 the Northwoods branch collaborated with the League of Women Voters and the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa Nation to create a Land Acknowledgement Statement [Resolution for 2023 State Convention.odt - Google Drive](#) They formed a group to educate themselves about why it was important to create the LAS and brought a resolution to the WI State Convention.[link to resolution]

In 2024 Northwoods Branch member, Christine Ebert, created a calendar to celebrate Black Women during Black History Month [African American History Month Calendar for 2025.odt - Google Drive](#) Each day was a short synopsis of the life of a woman of color and her contribution to history. Another branch took it a step further choosing one Black woman each month to highlight at their branch meetings and an article in their monthly newsletter.

If you attended the 2025 AAUW WI Convention, you saw the video from Congresswoman Sarah McBride from the State of Delaware. We have Chris Ebert to thank for making this connection to the first Trans person elected to the House of Representatives. She also initiated a resolution on “Upholding the Civil Rights of Americans Who Identify as LGBTQ+.” Find the link to Sarah’s message, as well as the resolutions that were passed this year elsewhere in this issue of Badger Briefs.

Branches are meeting to discuss programs for the 2025-6 program year. We hope that by including some of these shared ideas and having open branch meetings you will continue to spread the word of the positive effects of diversity, equity and inclusion.



Go AAUW- Wisconsin!

Anyone up for a challenge? This one should be easy, and we have nearly nine months to complete it.

In the *AAUW Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report*, the five states with the highest number of members were California, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois and Pennsylvania. Did you catch that? Wisconsin is surrounded by three of the top five states! The February 1st counts for FY 2025 showed that California has 8,786, Minnesota has 1,578, Michigan has 1,576, Pennsylvania has 1,426 and Illinois has 1,397 members! Wisconsin has 1,384 members. Wait! Illinois bumped us out of the top five by a mere 13 members? That’s not right and I think we can correct it.

If every one of our 22 branches maintained their current membership number plus added one more in FY 2026, we’d overtake Illinois easily. It’s not that hard. It only takes one or two more members than the previous year in every branch. We currently have six branches who did just that this year: Chippewa Falls, Geneva Lake, Green Bay, Oshkosh, Northwoods, and Sheboygan all grew their membership totals, some by multiple members. Plus, Tomah branch maintained 100 per cent of their membership. That’s one-third of our branches already in the game.

With that solid record, I’m confident that our state can move ahead of Illinois and claim a spot in the top five. All it takes is everyone in every branch pulling together, sharing AAUW’s mission and the good work we are doing. It’s just retention and recruitment, nothing new or fancy. Like the old Girl Scout song says, “Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver and the other gold.” So, let’s get started! The clock is ticking.

Carol S. Surges
Membership-VP

STEM Ahead

The STEM chairs and branch coordinators met at the state convention on April 25th. Pat Phillips could not attend the convention, so Annie Allen-Wyman (La Crosse branch, District #4 Coordinator) led the conversation with 7 branches represented. Every branch had a chance to brag and ask for ideas. Fort Atkinson and Janesville branches organized Tech Savvy, a half-day event for middle school students offering hands-on workshops led by professional women in STEM careers and held at UW-Whitewater. After 5 years of Tech Savvy, they have recommendations for other branches wishing to replicate such an event. Sheboygan invites local industries to provide short presentations and hands-on activities that engage middle school girls -- this year will be the 10th year of organizing that event! Several branches plan STEM programming for their members; sometimes the topic crosses over into pay equity, economic challenges, and environmental concerns. The biggest takeaway from this conversation was **partnerships**. Branches around the state are partnering not only with higher education and local schools, but also with groups like Junior Achievement, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts, and others.

The Sheboygan branch raised an issue that needs attention. The Sheboygan branch has had a long-time partnership for STEM programming with UW-Oshkosh, and money was available through a university-based non-profit. However, because STEM (and AAUW) is associated with diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, the university funding partnership is ending due to threats by state and federal governments. The Sheboygan branch is forming its own STEM non-profit 501(c) (3).

Share your experiences and ideas. Do other branches have funding challenges because of the recent political climate? Are universities and other entities ridding themselves of STEM activities? Please share your stories, questions, and ideas with Pat Phillips, AAUW Wisconsin STEM chair (pphillips1400@gmail.com).

Submitted by Annie Allen-Wyman

Public Policy

At the convention in late April, 2025, Meghan Kissell directed us to the slight change in direction our public policy work at the national level is taking. As an organization, AAUW has always been an advocate for equity in education and opportunities. That is not changing but we will speak with more force and specifics. The priority nationally will be Advancing Priorities in Higher Education. We are being urged to **write to our national Senators and Representatives urging them to oppose the harmful cuts to higher education in the reconciliation bill advanced by the House Education & Workforce Committee last week.**

The following page gives you details.

<https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/files/2025/05/Strategic-Plan-1-Pager.pdf>

As a state, AAUW Wisconsin members can also advocate to our legislators in Madison and in their districts. Our focus will be on education funding, particularly the damage being done by having taxpayer dollars pay for private education. Understanding how our education dollars are being spent has been simplified as a Power Point presentation by Margaret Willms and Cindy Zahrte, a recently-retired school superintendent. You can use this presentation at branch meetings noting that some data is from 2024.

<https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/files/2025/05/Facts-About-Public-Private-and-Charter-Schools-Powerpoint.pptx>

Barbara Petersen
Public Policy Co-Chair

Be sure to check our Wisconsin AAUW website for information about Public Policy as well as other AAUW initiatives.

[AAUW Wisconsin \(WI\)](#)

New content is added often.

Wall of Positive Thoughts Postings from 2025 AAUW WI Convention

Wise Words

- Stay calm and resist!
- Care and share forever!
- The pendulum will swing back.
- We are good people! We'll be okay!!
- Every woman is a Beautiful woman.
- Don't give up love when all you hear is criticisms of our way of life you are meant to be.
- You are important Awesome convention; Thank You



Actions

- So many women...United in a common goal, a hopeful future.
- Lift each other up Over bringing each other down. Women power We all are better when we work together.
- Give compliments freely
- We won't be Mollies. We have science, facts, resources.
- We can make a difference!!
- Taking part in demonstrations.
- Empowered by the sincere & devoted effort of resistance!!
- You can't do everything but everyone can do something to make a difference
- Speak up even if your voice shakes!
- Nevertheless, we will persist!
- BE aware & present.
- Enthusiasm for important causes
- Call to action with sisters & brothers.



Things we are grateful for, that uplift us

- Thankful for people working together for the benefit of all.
- The constancy of Mother Nature.
- Humor.
- Our state is beautiful. We are lucky to have the close relationship with nature.
- Family and friends.
- My tulips & daffodils are blooming.
- Susan Crawford.
- Music.
- My young adult daughters who are wise, loving, resilient and hopeful.
- Being around like-minded women who try to make an impact (a positive one!).
- Grateful for all those demonstrating for Democracy. Thank you!
- I'm grateful for our branch, all the good projects we bring to our community and I'm grateful for all our members



AAUW Inspirations

- AAUW sister/brotherhood.
- Thankful to be a part of this dynamic group of like-minded women.
- Love being with all these great people; doers & shakers.
- It's great to be with intelligent & compassionate women working together.
- Being inspired by the passion of everyone here.
- Amazing Active United Women! Hang in there!!
- So happy to be part of this group of women!
- Strong & vibrant women who make their communities, state & nation better!
- I love belonging to AAUW--we care about our community & each other.
- Being with AAUW friends!
- AAUW convention is a source of Pride.
- I love the enthusiasm of our 5 district coordinators about their branches!
- Loved the opportunity to meet the State Treasurer- awesome Lady.

Box of despair thoughts

2025 AAUW WI Convention

Worries about the country

- ✗ The out of control federal debt
- ✗ The takedown of national parks & public lands
- ✗ What will happen to vaccination rates in the future? That was something that actually made America great!
- ✗ The dismantling of the Dept. of Education and the EPA rollbacks of air & water quality--very distressing!
- ✗ The unlawful deportations-absolute cruelty of "detention" & sending people to El Salvador
- ✗ The lack of coordinated and bold action by Congress—Dems and others—beyond speaking online, but organizing disruption and accountability □ Gaza and the US and all the complicity.
- ✗ Please bring back compassion and caring for others to our leaders—leaders, please stand up and stop the madness!!

Worries about our families

- ✗ My transgender daughter and grandchild have hard lives.
- ✗ It is time to return to the honest truth!
- ✗ I fear for my grandchildren that they will live *always in a derisive world.*

Despair about Trump & the administration

- ➔ Trump & his cabinet □ Felon 47!
- ➔ I can't believe our country is going down the path towards oligarchy. Democracy at risk!!!
- ➔ (F)Elon, T-Rump.
- ➔ We haven't even hit 100 days and sinking, sinking, sinking.
- ➔ Trump administration and policies.
- ➔ Threat to democracy.
- ➔ I fear for our democracy--our planet.
- ➔ One word--Trump!
- ➔ I wish Trump's pants would fall down in public. Ugh!
- ➔ Decline of Democracy.
- ➔ Overwhelming concern about the direction the country is going & if we can come back from it.

AAUW WI State Board 2024-25

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Badger Briefs articles due 2 weeks after State board meetings.

Special issues may be sent as needed.

The issues will be sent to branches to be forwarded to their members.

Board Meetings: Due Dates:
July 19th, 2025 Friday August 8th

Send articles with subject line: *Badger Briefs* Article to:
rjadams65@frontier.com