

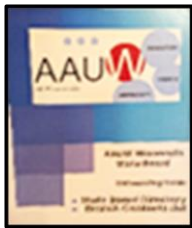
BADGER BRIEFS



September Issue 2025

AAUW-President Fall Kick-off by Deb Thiel

July 19 was our first **state board** meeting of the year. What a great bunch of strong, intelligent, experienced, and generous leaders. Everyone working together and doing their part makes little work with greater outcomes. Each one of you is important in one way or another to AAUW. Support one another, share your talents. We worked on our strategic plan, aligning our blueprint for the year with **national**'s objectives, so we can best support branch needs. We know you are gearing up for a great year too! Here are a few things I'd like to highlight!



- ✓ Make sure **branch president/co-presidents** received an **Onboarding Guide Directory**! This handy reference lists all the meetings for the year, state board officer details and contact information for the board and branch leaders. This is your resource. Reach out and connect!
- ✓ Please check our **website** **often** for updates and resources!
- ✓ Share your branch programs on our **calendar**!



- ✓ Seen **Two-minute Activist** lately? You should! Get AAUW minded friends & family to sign-up too!
- ✓ Join or watch the **August 19** public policy webinar featuring **Denise Gaumer Hutchison** sharing her perspective on school vouchers in Wisconsin. Watch for a link on the state website. <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net>
- ✓ I love getting out to **your** branch events. If you haven't gone to the AAUW LaCrosse **Art Fair on the Green** fundraiser you are missing a gem! (That's me pictured at their event on July 26!)
- ✓ Keep scrolling- there's lots of information packed in this newsletter. Share parts that interest you with others!



**AAUW
Wisconsin
State
Board**

AAUW WI Public Policy

Communications on Issues and Actions

One of Public Policy's biggest challenges is to inform committee members and leadership in a timely manner. Political matters are rapidly and constantly changing. The committee will do our best to keep you informed of certain issues that align with our AAUW WI Public Policy Statement. <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/policy/> AAUW WI Public Policy co-chairs will use the AAUW WI website and four contact lists (PP Committee, Branch Presidents, State Board, and branch communications chairs) and the newsletter to get out the messages. The committee will provide live links whenever possible.



Stephanie Malaney



Barbara Peterson

Webinars

As we kick off the year, Public Policy Committee will continue to offer Webinars on important issues. August will be on school funding at K-12 and higher education. AAUW will continue to focus on higher education issues.

Our first Webinar's speaker is August 19, 2025, at 6:00 PM. Denise Gaumer Hutchison, NE Regional Organizer for Wisconsin Public Education Network and Education Chair for the League of Women Voters of Greater Green Bay will discuss: **The Truth and Lies about School Vouchers in Wisconsin** and their Impact. Watch for link on AAUW WI Website <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net>

Meet Your Legislators

The committee is working on more details about meeting face to face with legislators. Floor Periods are September 2-11, October 7-16, and November 7-20. The following are documents we created for our members.

Letters to the Editor on Against School Vouchers and Affordable Child Care

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wMLU8OivJxgHMfXUqsf7hIeR74J2PZi1/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114216187079337939899&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Connecting with Legislators

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ChA8nJJOgkzYIk5kgVsY5vg6LHH1M_j2/view?usp=sharing

We also are working with our AAUW WI members who represent us.

AAUW Two-Minute Activist

Please sign up for AAUW network so you can get action alerts and updates.

<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

Advocacy Toolkit

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/>

AAUW WI Public Policy Co-Chairs

Stephanie Malaney smalaney5@aol.com

Barb Peterson lpeters@dishup.us



Listen to **Dr. Jill McMullen**, 2025 AAUW Wisconsin Convention speaker's interview about rural health care.

<https://substack.com/@petebuttigieg/note/p-170460155?r=2qv8x8>

Branch Questionnaire Reveals Trends

Carole Salinas, past Leadership VP, current President-elect

Every two years, the AAUW WI Leadership VP conducts a survey/questionnaire of our Wisconsin branches. Surveys are designed to get an overview of what our branches are doing, what required tasks they have completed, what things are important to them, and what can AAUW Wisconsin do to assist branch leaders.

This year, we had a great response with 20 of our 22 branches submitting the questionnaire. Thank you so much for taking the time to share your thoughts and ideas. Below is a brief summary of some of the trends that surfaced.



Carole Salinas

Required Tasks

Most branches completed the 5-Star branch survey. Congratulations! We are looking forward to lots of stars being awarded to Wisconsin branches. Far fewer branches have submitted their updated bylaws to our state bylaws chair. The first seven articles of all branch bylaws need to be updated with the mandated changes that were approved in May 2023. Email your bylaws to Sara Ramaker at ramaker.sara@gmail.com. Please make sure this gets done. If you need help, contact Carole at csalinas3767@gmail.com.

Social Media

Nineteen of our branches have a Facebook page. If you are a Facebook user, please like/follow your branch Facebook page and also the AAUW Wisconsin Facebook page. If you are the administrator of your page, you are encouraged to share content from AAUW WI and AAUW National to your branch page. If you have questions about Facebook, contact Becca Surges at rebecca.surges@gmail.com.

Most of our branches maintain a website. We encourage branch leaders to submit your local AAUW events

Public Policy

The questionnaire indicated that most branch leaders have no idea how many of their members are signed up for “Two-Minute Activist.” This is a great tool for having your voice heard on public policy issues. Please share this link [AAUW Action Network – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](#) with members and others who are not AAUW members.

Membership

Ten branches indicated that they have not used the Shape the Future discount program for new members and those rejoining after a two-year lapse. The Shape the Future membership campaign is a tool that branches can use to recruit members. With this campaign, branches can offer 50% off national dues when prospective members join AAUW at an event or meeting. Branches also earn one free national membership for every two new members they recruit, with a maximum of three free memberships annually. More information is available at [Shape the Future Campaign – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](#)



2026 State Convention

April 17-18, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton

Madison, WI

Membership



Judy Hangartner

Greetings!

As the new Membership VP for AAUW WI, I'd like to extend a big thank you to Deb, Carol Surges, Carole Salinas, and the entire board for their support, suggestions, and, most of all, their welcoming messages as I begin my role as Membership VP.

As the first order of business, Carol has challenged the branches to increase their membership by 1-2 members, so AAUW WI can surpass Illinois in the top midwestern states for total memberships. As a fan of UW-Madison and the Badgers (both our daughters graduated from Madison), I will say, On Wisconsin!

One way to accomplish this goal is to take advantage of AAUW's Shape the Future (STF) campaign and to use the free memberships that branches have earned. I have received questions about both programs. I will first direct you to Carole Salinas' article on membership and encourage you to review the information on the AAUW national website. The link that Carole provided will take you directly to the posting about both programs.

The following will highlight information regarding questions about STF and free memberships:

SHAPE THE FUTURE MEMBERSHIPS

- New members or members returning to AAUW after 2 years or longer will receive a 50% discount on national and state membership dues. These discounts can be given when they complete an application at a branch meeting or event. They should pay the discounted national dues of \$37, the discounted state dues of \$6.50, plus full branch dues. The member receiving the discount should be enrolled within 10 days of the meeting or event they attend.
- It's easiest to process STF memberships online rather than using the application form. The form does not allow for the STF code and 50% discount to be entered. This year's code, **STFFY26**, should be entered to receive the discount. The Financial VP is the easiest person to handle these memberships, but each branch should decide who is the best person to enroll STF members.
- Online, the branch pays 50% national dues and FULL state and branch dues. The state gets the full \$13 reimbursement and refunds the branch \$6.50 along with the branch dues.

FREE MEMBERSHIPS

A branch earns one free membership for every 2 new members that are enrolled.

The deadline for using the free membership is October 31.

The branch can decide how to use these free memberships in any way they choose, such as:

1. The board decides who should receive one.
2. A member who is "on the fence" about renewing is offered a free membership.
3. A member who has gone "over and above" in service to the branch is rewarded for her contributions to AAUW.

On the September 11 branch President's Zoom call, there will be time for Q&A regarding this information. Financial and Membership VPs will also receive an invitation to the Zoom call.

Judy Hangartner
Membership VP



SPOTLIGHT:

Two AAUW Sheboygan members 'gavel' the way to the future as leaders and role models

By: Deborah Thiel and Ann Meseck



Presenting Judge Angela Sutkiewicz serving as a circuit court judge in Sheboygan County for the past 15 years and currently as the presiding judge. Judge Sutkiewicz was the first woman to become a circuit court judge in Sheboygan County at a time when only 17% of Wisconsin circuit court judges were women. Judge Sutkiewicz initiated and presides over the Sheboygan Area Veterans Treatment Court, the first treatment court in Sheboygan County.

She's served on the Wisconsin Task Force on Children in Need, the Wisconsin Division of Children and Families Judicial Workgroup, the Wisconsin Judicial

Committee on Child Welfare and the Executive Committee of the Judicial Conference. Other community activities include participating for many years in Citizens Academy, Youth Government Day, Law Day for elementary and middle school students, Sea Cadets Mock Trial, Courts Connecting with Communities and hosting educational opportunities for both adults and students to learn about the court system.

Judge Sutkiewicz started her legal career as an Assistant District Attorney in Walworth County, becoming the first woman full time prosecutor. Angela Sutkiewicz served on the Sheboygan Police and Fire Commission and served on many Boards such as Safe Harbor, Deland Receiving Home and Children's Service Society of Wisconsin. Judge Sutkiewicz was also a member of the Crime Victims' Rights Board.

As a law student at Marquette University, Angela Sutkiewicz served on the Marquette Law Review and served as President of the Women in Law Association. Less than a quarter of her graduating class were women. Angela and her husband raised three daughters. We are grateful to her for illuminating the door of possibility for those who follow

Introducing Natasha Torry, state trial court judge in Wisconsin, elected to Sheboygan County Circuit Court Branch 2 in 2023. Before that she served as Sheboygan Area Municipal Court Judge. She owned and operated a solo law practice, served as an Assistant Corporation Counsel and practiced in the nonprofit sector at the Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee and Legal Action of Wisconsin. Natasha Torry graduated from the University of Wisconsin law School in 2001, where she was a Knapp Fellowship recipient and a member of the Law Review. She earned a *Politics in Government* degree from Ripon College.



Judge Torry is an active volunteer in the legal as well as local community. Interestingly, she was appointed by Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Shirley Abrahamson to the Selections Committee and was Sheboygan County Bar Association President. Natasha serves on the Boys and Girls Clubs of Sheboygan County and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center Boards. If that is not busy enough add on 4 teenage children. It's a good thing that she loves cooking with her husband and hiking. We applaud both Torry and Angela for their fine example and value their membership in AAUW!





Changing our name

I was very pleased to volunteer as our first DEI Coordinator for the La Crosse Branch of AAUW five years ago. I thought it was a perfect fit for me, as I worked in the field of diversity and was hoping to contribute to our club and its members. It was my passion. What wonderful things we accomplished. I was proud to lead the AAUW's DEI mission. Then the 2024 election came to pass, and DEI became a forbidden word. What was once a powerful name is becoming a distrusted one, along with the "Woke" culture. As I talked with my colleagues, much of the frustration with the name and people were seeing DEI as less desirable and disregarded by some as just a fad, at first, I resented the fact that we had to look at the title of "DEI" as though it was a forbidden name, I finally decided that we needed to broaden our sights and look at another name. I talked to other DEI coordinators in the state and nationally, as well as our BOD and other members, and we decided on a name that would reflect what we are doing. I liked it, and we are in the process of revealing this to our members at our opening Potluck in September. Our new name for the diversity committee is the **Equity and Belonging Committee**, a name that we collectively chose, reflecting our shared vision and values. I must say the response has been overwhelmingly positive. We have emphasized these two concepts in our programs and hope to continue striving to live them in our Branch.

June Reinert, Coordinator of the Equity and Belonging Committee, La Crosse Branch

Dido Rachel Overgard Nash



Dido served as AAUW-WI State President from 1985-1987, continuing to mentor incoming leaders, participating in our conventions and more until her passing in early July. Her family requested memorials to include AAUW-WI, hence <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/> As monies are collected, we will work to determine

the best use of the money to honor Dido's legacy. We shall all pass one day – but we live today. Make it full and meaningful like Dido

Cheryl Anderson, AAUW-WI Past President 1996-1998, shares thoughts



On July 6 she completed her 93+ year journey which was full of adventure and fun

She has accepted a new volunteer role in the beyond.....
She will diligently watch over her family and all of us who called her "my friend"

Her words of advice and wisdom echo in our minds
We recall her spunk and unfiltered assertions of what's right and wrong

She was an intelligent, centered, strong and humble person
in her own avant-garde way

Her rich legacy is her deep devotion to her husband, her family and their land,

And she was a strong advocate for women's rights and mentored feverishly as a high school teacher.

Her devilish smile and sense of humor will live on in our fondest memories of her

She is an unmatched and spectacular star in her orbit
She was my role model, my mentor, my BFF, and I will deeply miss her

An unforgettable woman with
an unforgettable name.....Dido!

NCCWSL 2025 and Beyond

by Jan Eriksen



Jan Eriksen

Carole Salinas obtained evaluations from the two college students who AAUW-WI sponsored to attend NCCWSL, held May 28-30 at University of Maryland, College Park. The young women were:

- Ava Zak, a student at University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Ava said, "I would 100% recommend this conference to people at my college. It was a great experience and a good way to meet new people, network. . ."
- Marina Rizzo of Nicolet College. Marina created an evaluation document complete with photos. She indicated, "The keynote speeches were very inspiring and really resonated with me."

In addition, AAUW River Falls sponsored Reese Benware, UWRF student, with branch funds. Reese commented, "I feel like I learned so much and gained so many new things that will help me develop in the professional sphere."

There may be other branches which sponsored students to attend NCCWSL. [If your branch sent one or more students to the conference, please notify me at \[jperiksen@viterbo.edu\]\(mailto:jperiksen@viterbo.edu\).](#) It's important for the state Board of Directors to follow up with Wisconsin NCCWSL participants so we can evaluate the quality of the conference now that it is under the auspices of NASPA, an organization of student affairs administrators in higher education. The conference's name, dates, location, mission, and learning outcomes have not changed. Gloria Blackwell, CEO of AAUW, was one of the keynote speakers at NCCWSL 2025.



Pat Phillips



The New STEM & Student Empowerment Focus

We're broadening the STEM chair and committee work to support leadership and career exploration opportunities for middle and high school girls, including options beyond STEM. The new committee will be called STEM & Student Empowerment. The general goal will be to encourage branches to create or support quality student leadership opportunities.

This first year will be an "envisioning" year. We will gather ideas, ask branches about their current projects, explore what branches are interested in, find collaboration opportunities, and share event and project ideas with branches.

We already have a couple of ideas on the drawing board, but as with everything else, the more brains we put to the task, the more and better ideas we will have to work with.

Please join our research team. Contact Pat Phillips, AAUW STEM & Student Empowerment Chair, AAUW WI. (pPhillips1400@gmail.com)



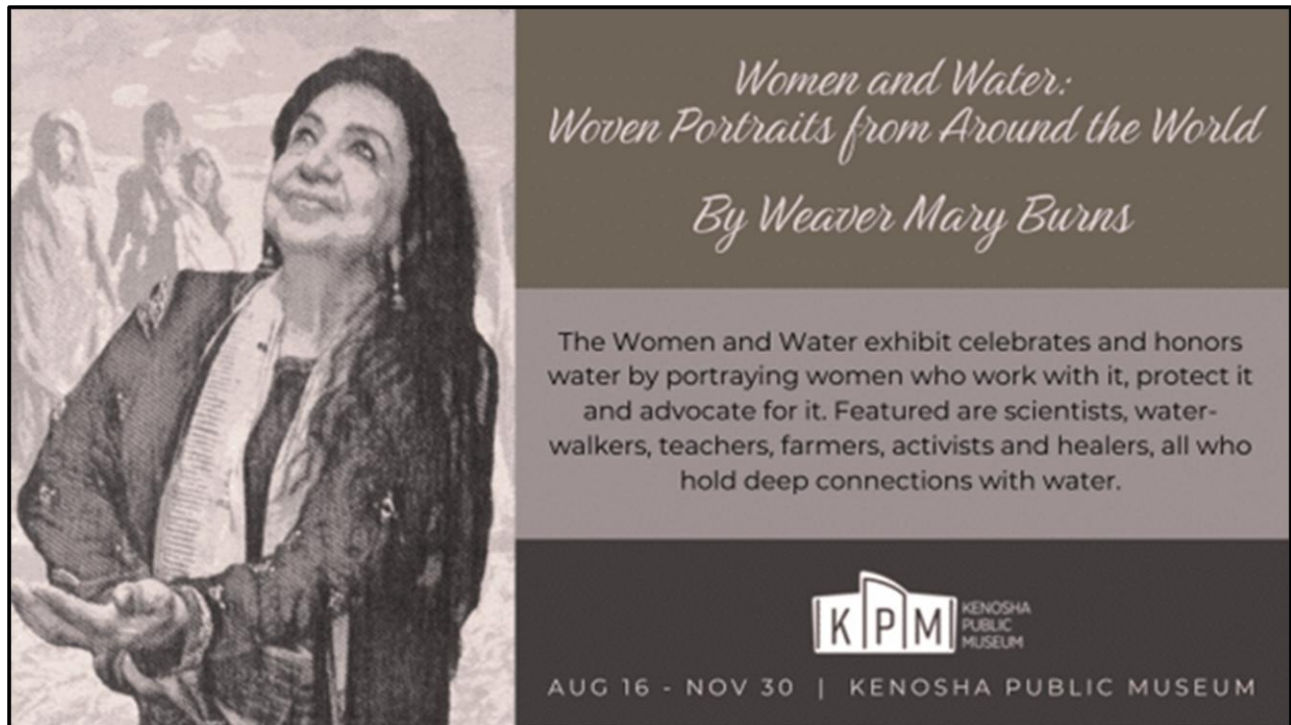
Group work at the board meeting. Lunch too!

From District 3

[Exhibit Opening: Ancestral Women: Portraits of Elders from the 12 Tribes of Wisconsin](#)

Kenosha Public Museum 5500 1st Ave, Kenosha, WI, United States

August 16, 2025 – November 30, 2025 In the Ancestral Women exhibit, award-winning jacquard weaver Mary Burns honors women's journeys by creating their portraits in jacquard weavings. The Ancestral Women project features elders from Wisconsin's 12 tribes, and was conceived to portray the strength of ancestral women around the world, both elders and their contemporaries, [...]



State Board at work



Group work and lunch

From Deb Theil, a Call for Action!

Blocking access to abortion for Veterans- open comment period

I wanted you all to be aware there is an open comment period now re: the proposed VA rule changes for women who served - which would remove access to abortion in the case of rape and incest.

This comment period ends September 3 - so let your voice be heard.

This looks like an opportunity for statement/ action to be taken by AAUW re: Federal register comment period by September 3!

<https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/08/va-end-abortion-services-cases-rape-and-incest/407194/>

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/04/2025-14687/reproductive-health-services?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwMAIgNleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHiYqwL53s0TMaQAu9lIEHK-AselqZwedv1e_f2eU9dF65B0X8OJ54b0fz7bP_aem_RwXGsAPIwQxcI1K6XZ_UkA

https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2025/08/04/va-leaders-move-to-end-all-abortions-at-department-medical-sites/?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwMAIq5leHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHiYqwL53s0TMaQAu9lIEHK-AselqZwedv1e_f2eU9dF65B0X8OJ54b0fz7bP_aem_RwXGsAPIwQxcI1K6XZ_UkA

My submission to federal registrar:

Only 140 abortions in a year conducted of 300,000 women of childbearing years. (.00046 or almost zero percent). Between 6 and 7% of women report sexual misconduct and assault in the military.

Why isn't there more abortion? For one, because women don't take abortion lightly. It is traumatic, physically, emotionally, and mentally. It is a tough decision and unless you are pregnant it isn't your decision to make. The US government should be forced to endure all lifelong costs and hardships endured by refusal to cover an abortion in cases of incest and rape.

Women bear the brunt of pregnancy and toll of pregnancy, birth and child protection. They have hard decisions to make. Made especially difficult, following the trauma of sexual assault by those you trusted. Don't deny them options or the dignity to lead their own lives. Rape had always been a tool of control, subjugation, and genocidal warfare. Do better.

You owe those who serve more than this!

Meet Your New AAUW-WI DEI Committee Chair

Hello AAUW-WI members,

I'm excited to introduce myself as your new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Chair. Many of you may know me from my work as President and DEI Chair of the Green Bay Area branch. Last year, I served on the AAUW-WI state board as the Nominating Committee Chair, and I'm looking forward to bringing that same energy and commitment to this new role.



Terri Gulyas

In the year ahead, we'll draw on the excellent DEI tools and resources created by our national organization and explore ways to use technology effectively to strengthen our efforts. Collaboration will be a central theme—working alongside community partners and organizations to expand our impact across Wisconsin.

I'd love to hear your ideas and learn from your experiences. If you are interested in attending a meeting or joining the conversation, please contact me at tsgulyas@gmail.com. Together, we can keep building a more inclusive, equitable future for all.

Warmly,

Terri Gulyas

DEI Committee Chair, AAUW-WI

AAUW WI State Board 2024-25

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dick.deb@gmail.com

President Elect Carole Salinas
csalinas3767@gmail.com

Membership VP Judy Hangartner
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Program VP Kleo Baruth Kritz
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STEM /Student Empowerment Chair
Pat Phillips
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Make an Impact
Join AAUW
Legacy Circle

Lucy Harvey
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Bonnie Diehl
bdiehl81@gmail.com



<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/ways-to-give-aauw/leave-a-legacy/>

AAUW Wisconsin
AAUW-wi.aauw.net
aauw.wisconsin@gmail.com

AAUW National
AAUW.org

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:
October 24th November 7th
January 24th February 7th
April 17th May 9th

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