



Faribault Affiliate Communiqué

AAUW Mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.



President's Message for September 2025

Do you have an "itchy mind"? Do you ask questions? Want to know things? Do you want to learn?

September is a time of change but also a return to routines. Somewhat of an oxymoron, eh. As AAUW begins another year in Faribault, I'm excited as your president to help make it another successful year of growth for ourselves and others as we work to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

Thanks to all our members who work so faithfully and diligently toward those goals. I have met with several of you to plan for this year and I'm impressed with your commitment and dedication. Thank you.

Our upcoming programs will give all of us an opportunity to expand our knowledge and ask questions. Maybe it will be a question on our history or maybe an event happening in our world today; our year's programs cover it. Do you have an "itchy mind"? (Louise Erdrich used the phrase "itchy mind" in her book, *The Bingo Place*)

September 22, Monday, due to speaker conflicts, our meeting for this month only will begin at 2:30 at RCHS. We will take care of business, socialize, and then hear from Kiran Löwenstein as she speaks on the history of Sacagawea.

Hope to see the room filled with dedicated women working toward a common goal.

JoEllen Schulz, President

September Affiliate Meeting

Monday, September 22
2:30 (For this month only)
Rice County Historical Society



Sacajawea statue in Idaho. Photo credit: BLM

Join us for a great first meeting of our program year. We will socialize, conduct some business, including our Halloween Breakfast Fundraiser, and then have a chance to scratch our “itchy” minds as we listen and ask questions about a famous woman in history

How fortunate we are to have Kiran Lowenstein, RCHS education and outreach coordinator come to speak to us about Sacajawea. Kiran spent an internship in Salmon, Idaho at the Sacajawea Interpretive Center. You don’t want to miss this.

* * * * *

Looking Forward

This is from Mary Schwanke from the Owatonna AAUW

Here is more information on our Nov meeting featuring Kelsey Waits as the speaker. It is in support of resolution 3. We would be happy to see you there.

Tuesday, November 11, 2025, 6:30 PM Social Time and 7:00 PM Program

FOSTERING A SENSE OF SAFETY AND SUPPORT FOR LGBTQIA+ RESIDENTS AND VISITORS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

*Location: Mineral Springs Brewery
Hosts: Barb Nowak, Sherry Hill, Mary Cronin*

LGBTQIA+ individuals of all ages indicate they feel threatened and unsafe in the current political environment. AAUW advocates for equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society and for freedom from violence and fear of violence, including hate crimes in homes, schools, workplaces and community gatherings.

At the AAUW State Meeting in April 2025, a resolution was passed that AAUW branches in Minnesota will work toward fostering a sense of safety and support for LGBTQIA+ residents and visitors in their communities. Owatonna has work to do!

Our speaker is **Kelsey Waits, MN state president of AAUW** and mother of two amazing children, the youngest of whom is transgender. In her personal, professional, and academic lives, Kelsey is an outspoken advocate for transgender rights. She has provided both written and oral testimony to the Minnesota legislature and worked tirelessly to pass Minnesota's Trans Refuge Law. Kelsey previously served as School Board Chair in Hastings MN and she currently serves as the Vice Chair of OutFront MN Action. In addition to her advocacy work, Kelsey is a PhD student at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs where she is studying the rise of anti-transgender policies and their impact on the LGBTQIA2S+ community. In tandem with her PhD studies, Kelsey is currently working for the State of Minnesota as the Research Director for the Council on LGBTQIA2S+ Minnesotans. Kelsey runs a non-profit that supports LGBTQIA2S+ youth.

* * * * *

Membership

WELCOME BACK LADIES!

Having just celebrated the 100th Year Anniversary of our Faribault AAUW Affiliate, we have contributed many scholarships for women and girls, Including this year. 62 women and girls have received 62 scholarships from 1979-2025! All the women before us -in the past - and our own group - in the present - should be very proud of how we have "Made a Difference" through our projects and support!

Please mention some of our contributions when you talk to prospective members. Even ask former members if they would like to rejoin us. Maybe at this stage of their lives it would be easier to attend meetings or work on committees. Remember our afternoon monthly meetings are scheduled at 2:00 now. No night driving:)

Thanks to everyone who has paid their membership dues for our 2025/2026 program year.

Dues are still a bargain!

New-First Year Membership (or rejoining after 2 years absent \$55.00
Regular membership : \$93.00.(only \$7.75 a month to help women)

For more information, please contact Kathy Larson - Membership Vice-President

1 - 507 - 332 - 2525 kathyhilgerslarson@gmail.com

* * * * *

Scholarships

Our Faribault Branch is pleased to award \$1500 scholarships to Sadie Kern and Evy Vettrus. Kern is a University of Minnesota – Rochester student with aspirations to become a physician's assistant. Vettrus, a Minnesota State University – Mankato student hopes to one day be a commercial pilot. Funds for the scholarships are raised with the AAUW annual Scholarship Benefit Omelet Halloween Breakfast which will be October 26th at the American Legion.

Mary Lillquist, Karen Rasmussen, Scholarship Chair, Sadie Kern, and Kathy Larson.



Kathy Larson, Evy Vettrus and Karen Rasmussen

Karen Rasmussen, Local Scholarship Chair

* * * * *

Treasurer's Report

Financial report: Current balance \$10,468.03 as of (9/12/25). Since the May 1st balance of \$13,851.88 we:

- Had Convention expenses for 4 @ \$821.62
- President's gift @ \$49.65
- Donations from Current and Former Members @ \$175
- Scholarships for 2 @ \$1500 ea
- Interest @ \$4.41
- Dues payment from 22 @ \$93 (most did) \$2049 (+\$5, -\$2)
- Payment to Arna for picnic catering for 24 @ \$20 ea
- 23 members paid \$20 each for picnic catering
- Memorials from 3 for May Bottke totaling \$105
- Payment in advance from Rice County Historical Society for selling 25 maps (@ \$5, split in half) \$62.50

Submitted by Karen Rasmussen, Treasurer

* * * * *



BOOK CLUB NEWS

Our September book is *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Majan Kamali. We will meet **Thursday, September 18 at 2pm at Diane's.**

This was our summer reading list:

June: *James* by Percival Everett; July: *Beet Queen* by Louise Erdrich; August: *The Things We Didn't Know* by Elba Iris Perez.

Barb

* * * * *

AAUW Socials



We'll be gathering for conversation, coffee, breakfast or lunch at Janna's Market on Saturday, September 20th at 11:00. Hope you can join us!

Thank you,

Sue Olson

From the May Spring Picnic at Pat Umbreit's



Outgoing president, Mary Niermann, was presented with a beautiful plant by Pauline Schreiber.



AAUW Funds Chair, Liz Hartman (in middle) presented Named Honoree certificates and plants to Carmen Tripp, JoEllen Schulz, Pat Umbreit and Barb Dubbels. (See more in

minutes below)

Faribault AAUW Branch Meeting

Minutes for the May 19, 2025, Faribault AAUW Business Meeting

Faribault AAUW Branch members met at 6 p.m. Monday, May 19, 2025, at Pat Umbreit's house, 3593 Chappuis Trail, on Roberds Lake for a spring picnic. Twenty-four members attended. The evening began with a social time, followed by a catered meal by Arna Farmer Catering. At 7:15 p.m., the business meeting began.

President Mary Niermann started the meeting by asking if there were any additions or corrections to the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports published in the emailed newsletter. Hearing none, she deemed them approved.

Niermann mentioned the great turnout for the picnic and thanked members for coming to share the end of Faribault AAUW's Centennial Year and celebration of the end of another successful program year.

Halloween Breakfast

Kathy Larson, co-chair of the Halloween Breakfast Fundraiser, announced that Sunday, Oct. 26, at the Faribault American Legion has been reserved for the breakfast. Karen Rasmussen, the other co-chair of the breakfast, said she had checked and there is no Viking's game that Sunday. Rasmussen asked for suggestions. "I think what we have been doing has been working," Liz Hartman said. Other members agreed. Having the tickets printed by the September meeting, on Sept. 22, was the only suggestion. Members will then have a month to sell advance ticket. More details of the breakfast will be finalized at the branch's August planning session.

Sports Woman of the Year

Mary Osborne, in charge of AAUW's Sportswoman of the Year Award, announced that Nell Gibbs was selected as the 2025 AAUW Sportswoman of the Year. The FHS Senior is a two-time Academic All State Award winner, a five-year varsity runner, and a three-year varsity tennis player. She is the FHS record holder for the most points earned in the 300-meter hurdles and a Big 9 Conference honorable mention achiever in that event. She was also a state participant in Cross Country.

Gibbs participated in DECA, Student Council, National Honor Society, and was a chemistry teacher's assistant. She also played cello in orchestra and volunteered for many community groups. She plans to attend Benedictine College to study biochemistry with a research focus.

The selection team included Osborne, Bonnie Becker and Betty Harmsen.

Named Honoree

Liz Hartman, vice president of AAUW Funds for the branch, announced the 2025 Named Honorees. The local branch donated \$2,660 to AAUW Funds allowing it to honor four women. They were: JoEllen Schultz for serving as a treasurer; Pat Umbreit for being the branch's long-term historian and putting together scrapbooks of each program year; Barb Dubbels for being the long-time organizer and host for AAUW's book club; and Carmen Tripp for stepping up to be co-president during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 program years. Hartman presented each with a certificate and a pot of begonias.

She, also, thanked members who donated items to the branch's wine basket donated to the silent auction at the State Convention in Austin April 25-26. The basket went for \$125.

Local Scholarships

Karen Rasmussen, chair of the scholarship committee, said the deadline is June 1 to apply. She has received five applications, so far, for the two local \$1,500 scholarships the

branch will be awarding this summer. There is an easy online application form, but applicants need to provide all information requested to be considered for a scholarship. She asked members to mention the scholarship to those women they know of who could benefit from it.

Thank You to Outgoing President

Pauline Schreiber, vice president of programs and secretary, came forth with a gift for Niermann to thank her for stepping up to be a co-president with Carmen Tripp, and then president alone, for the past program year, when no one came forth to be co-president. Schreiber presented Niermann a plant and gift card from Donahue's Greenhouse on behalf of the branch. A hearty applause from members followed to thank Niermann for her service.

Stepping Up to be President

Schreiber quickly followed the thank you to Niermann with an announcement. JoEllen Schultz has volunteered to be president next year as long as all the past presidents of the branch serve as consultants to her. She, also, received a hearty applause for stepping up to lead the branch next year.

No Election

Because of branch bylaws requiring a slate of officers to be announced a month in advance of an election, election of officers will be in September.

Submitted by Secretary Pauline Schreiber

* * * * *

The Faribault AAUW Branch Newsletter is published from September to May during our program year. The Editors are Emily Nesvold and Liz Hartman. Because of different operating systems and formats, articles other than Google Docs, should be submitted within the text of an email, not as an attachment. Items should be sent by the 10th of the month to either Emily enesvold@gmail.com or Liz ethartmanariz@gmail.com on alternating months. A reminder email will always be sent out.