

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

### AAUW La Crosse: Looking Forward

When: Tuesday, Sept. 12

Time: 5:00-7:00pm

Where: English Lutheran Church  
1509 King Street, La Crosse  
Parking adjacent to the building

#### What: Potluck Supper

Bring a favorite dish to share  
(appetizer, salad, entrée or dessert)  
Beverages and tableware provided

#### Program:

- Reflections from NCWSSL attendees
- Plans for the coming year
- Honoring our 50 yr members

Please RSVP by September 6th to  
Robert at 608-788-0595 or  
richards.rob2@eagle.uwlax.edu

The women who attended this year's National Conference for College Women Student Leaders will share their experience.

We'll review our branch goals for this year as well as introduce our committees; learn what opportunities there are for you to be involved this year.

Some of our branch members will be recognized for over 50 years of membership. Our new "Honorary Life Members" are Beverly Bodine, Patricia Boge, Sharon De Cicco, Alice Gassere, Marilyn Hempstead, Clara Peterson, Lila Seager, Carol Taebel, and Katie Webster.

We encourage all to invite a friend, colleague, or acquaintance to share the evening with us and learn about AAUW and our branch.

# AAUW

LA CROSSE (WI)

# The Current

a publication of the La Crosse, WI AAUW Branch

VOLUME 63, ISSUE 1

SEPTEMBER 2023



#### PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

## Hopeful Works

by Andrea Hansen, Branch President

Last September, a reception at the Myrick Park Center began the recognition of our Branch's Centennial Year. We enjoyed wonderful food, welcomed local and out-of-town guests, including AAUW-WI President Maggie Winz and WI Assemblywoman Jill Billings. We read Mayor Reynold's official Proclamation of AAUW Week and U.S. Senator Baldwin's letter of commendation. We recognized Lifetime Members, Judith Green and Joan Koonmen (joined in 1957), both who shared their leadership, artistic and scholarly talents for decades. The history of our Branch, told in lively narration and dialogue by our members in period dress from each decade, was the highlight. This celebration was key in generating energy and clarity for our Branch's incredibly creative and productive year!

Clearly, we are standing on the shoulders of past and long-term AAUW members. Our 100-year vantage point enables us to see, not only seismic changes, but also the effort required to remove barriers and overcome opposition to women and girls education and careers. We can see how much work remains. The persistence of sexism is

well-documented and everyone has a personal story to tell.

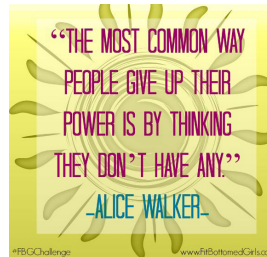
When we apply an

intersectional frame, the realities of progress, barriers and current threats become abundantly clear. The social categories to which we belong, such as race, class, disability, gender and sexual identities, undeniably shape experiences and opportunities in important ways.

AAUW's recent advocacy and public policy statements illustrate this reality:

- 7/26/23 Open Letter Supporting Full Inclusion of LGBTQI+ Youth in Education.
- 6/29/23 Letter to House & Senate Appropriation Urging Protection of Pell Grant Program
- 6/23/23 Statement Endorsing Accountability of Leaders to Report Title IX Investigations

*Continued on Page 2 »*



#### NEXT BOARD MEETING

**Monday, Sept 11**

via Zoom at 5:00pm

Zoom link available from Andrea

Meetings are open to all members

**To place items on the agenda or confirm your attendance,** contact

Andrea at 608-487-5571 or  
ahansen@uwlax.edu

## Hopeful Work... (continued from page 1)

"The health of a democracy can be assessed by degree of inclusiveness and representation of societal interests," asserts scholars Conny Roggebad and Andrea Krizsan for the UN Commission on the Status of Women. We know all is not well for our democracy. Local, state, and national news include examples of the backlash to hard-won progress. More troubling is the evidence of backsliding as existing policy directions on gender equality, civil and human rights are weakened or undone in countries, including the U.S. De-democratization is the context in which we, as AAUW and citizens, do our work.

I must confess that I am not particularly optimistic at this time. Optimism may be in short supply for you, too, especially if you heed Mother Jones' advice to "Sit down and read. Educate yourself for the coming conflicts." I am, however, a hopeful person and I gravitate to folks engaged in hopeful work. For over 100 years, AAUW-La Crosse Branch has "taken the side" of education to improve and defend it. It is one of the most important and hopeful and enterprises I can name. I am eager to begin this new AAUW year with you.

### Sources:

1. <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/documents/>
2. <http://cps.ceu.edu/article/2020-06-22/democratic-backsliding-and-backlash-against-womens-rights-understanding-current>
3. Snyder, T. (2017) *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. Tim Duggan Books, New York.

## 2023-2024 AAUW La Crosse Board

### Elected Officers

President: Andrea Hansen  
 President-elect: Lema Kabashi  
 Secretary: JoAnne Revels  
 Vice President Finance: Ann Brice  
 Vice President Membership VP: Barb Fischer  
 Vice President Program VP: Silvana Richardson

### Appointed Board

AAUW In Action (AIA) Coordinator: Erica Koonmen  
 Art Fair: Carol Robertson  
 By Laws: Carol Robertson  
 DEI Chair: June Reinert  
 Membership Directory: Robert Richardson  
 E-Mail RSVP Coordinator: Robert Richardson  
 Fundraising: *open*  
 Historian: Marilyn Hempstead  
 Hospitality : JoAnne Revels  
 Membership Directory: Robert Richardson  
 Name Grants: Jan Eriksen  
 Newsletter (*The Current*): Erica Koonmen  
 Publicity : *open*  
 Public Policy: Diana Elena Moran Sanchez Thundercloud  
 STEM Coordinator: Annie Allen-Wyman  
 Telephone Coordinator: Sarah Stuber  
 Scholarship Bridge: Sharon De Cicco  
 Scholarship Co-chairs: Sharon De Cicco & Robert Richardson  
 University Relations:  
     UWL - Andrea Hansen  
     Viterbo – Silvana Richardson  
     Western – Kari Reyburn



## EMAIL RSVP

By Robert Richardson

RSVP modus operandi: Fourteen days prior to a branch meeting, each member receives an e-mail message with a request to reply by 11:59pm on the Sunday prior to the meeting.



We need all members to reply so we know how many members/guests plan to attend and how many request

the meal. On Monday, we need to report both numbers to the catering service. Aramark prepares food/beverages in a quantity that aligns with the latter number, and the Branch is invoiced based on that number. Program committee members arrange seating according to the first number.

## BRANCH DIRECTORY

By Robert Richardson

The Branch Directory will be available at the "Looking Forward" September meeting.

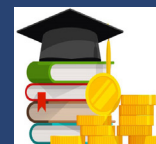
If you cannot attend the meeting, perhaps you can ask another member to take your Directory for you.



## SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS COMMITTEE

By Robert Richardson

The Scholarships & Grants Committee



will meet in-person in Room 103, School of Nursing, at 9am prior to the October Branch meeting. In advance, Robert will send

meeting-preparation materials. We will use our time efficiently and finish our business prior to the start of the branch meeting/program.

Optimism reigns supreme!

# STEM

by Annie Allen-Wyman, Chair

Some things don't change: girls and women are still systematically tracked away from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics careers throughout their free and public education, limiting their access, preparation, and opportunities in the S-T-E-M fields. According to AAUW.org, women make up only 28% of the workforce in STEM fields. In Biology, women are 46% of the workforce; in Chemistry, just over 40%; in computer science and mathematics, 25.2%; and in architecture and engineering, combined, women are 16.5% of the workforce. These gender gaps are particularly high in some of the fastest-growing and highest-paid jobs of the future, like computer science, especially cyber-security, and environmental/sustainable engineering. Why



so few? Myths about female intelligence continue to spread in our society – you know, girls aren't good at math. High school guidance counselors may perpetuate the myths by suggesting more

traditional career paths for the girls in their schools, and with a reduced presence of women working in these fields, those girls have few role models. One research paper included in the [Why So Few](#) (click on it to read it) article on [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org) demonstrates that telling girls that intelligence can expand with experience and learning, actually results in higher grades in math and science classes! "By creating a Growth Mindset, teachers and parents can encourage girls' achievements and interests in [STEM] careers."

AAUW provides free online courses for girls in middle and high school on the national website. Our partners, UW-La Crosse and Viterbo, host first-year seminars to encourage young women who are just "interested" to pursue their STEM studies. Western Technical College has a dedicated office for "non-traditional" students and their career paths, to shepherd and encourage girls in industry, construction, and computer sciences programs.

How can our La Crosse Branch help? By partnering with our partners and by spreading the word to girls and college-age women about STEM career paths: YES, YOU CAN!!

## Study Group News

### AAUW IN ACTION (AIA)

See this page for meeting info

Contact: Erica Koonmen, moogs56@hotmail.com

### HEARTH & HOME

Contact: Sharon DeCicco, 788-5356

### CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS

3rd Tuesday of the month at 2pm

Contact: Alice Ross, 788-4206

### SCHOLARSHIP BRIDGE/CARD GAMES

TBA; Contact: Sharon DeCicco, 788-5356

## AAUW IN ACTION (AIA)

*AAUW in Action (AIA) is a study group that serves as a spring-board for community service activities for our branch that promote AAUW's mission.*

If you're interested in joining us for a meeting, or just knowing what we're planning, please ask to be on our email list: Erica at moogs56@hotmail.com

**Next meeting: Thursday, Sept 21, 4:00pm, JavaVino**

Join us as we make plans for the upcoming year! Some of the continuing activities that we'll be talking about are:

- Women Supporting Women Globally
- Women's History Month (March)
- Equal Pay Day (March 15)
- International Women's Day (March 8)
- Internships

Ideas to explore:

- Collaborations with university student women's organizations
- Ways to engage the community on education
- Your ideas??

***Together we make it happen!***

## AAUW Regional Conference Oct 19- 21 St. Louis MO



Registration is going on now for the AAUW Central States Regional Conference, "Celebrating AAUW: Reaching New Heights Together!" The 2023 conference will begin at 1:00 p.m. Thursday, October 19, and close at noon Saturday, October 21. The Drury Plaza Hotel St. Louis at the Arch is the conference site.

There will be two keynote speakers: Lisa Maatz, a gender equality expert, will present, "Challenges Facing Member-Driven Organizations" and Gloria Blackwell, AAUW CEO, will be there in person to speak about the organization, its members, and its programs. There will be numerous sessions

on topics ranging from women's health and reproductive rights, the gender pay gap, and book bannings to voting rights and challenges.

Thursday evening dinner entertainment will be a performance: HERstory – Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Sojourner Truth.

The AAUW-Missouri website has additional information and forms: [aauw-mo.aauw.net](http://aauw-mo.aauw.net). The deadline for conference registration with early bird rates is September 16. Registration can be completed online or via the U.S. Postal Service. The Drury Hotel is holding rooms for AAUW members through September 16. The hotel reservation line is 1-800-325-0720. Please use the AAUW Code 10046618 when booking a room.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

by June Reinert, DEI Chair

The initial call for diversity training encompasses the entire AAUW membership: In a letter from the CEO of AAUW National in 2018, AAUW put forth a bold vision for our future with a new strategic plan. The plan included action-able goals and tactics towards achieving equity, along with the values, mission, and vision for the organization. But words are only as good as the paper they are printed on if they are not embodied in all we do. Our values include being fiercely nonpartisan, always fact-based and with the utmost of integrity, and a commitment to inclusion and intersectionality.

One of our key goals within the plan: To embody the goals and spirit of inclusion, diversity, and intersectionality across all AAUW activities and participants. We need to not only value the importance of intersectionality, diversity, and equity, we must do the work. Systemic racism is firmly rooted in the U.S. and the injustices of today mirror our shameful history, from police brutality to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color. AAUW must commit and continuously recommit to fighting for justice, long-term and lasting change, and we stand in solidarity against racism.

But, as AAUW is nearing 140 years old, we also acknowledge that as an organization we have a lot of our own work to do in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our commitment to diversity must be a commitment from all our 170,000 members and advocates around the nation who believe in our vision of equity for all. That means we must hold each other accountable; we must set bold goals and be transparent about where we are and where we are going, we must be lifelong learners in reading, listening, and understanding. I invite you to open your heart, your mind, your ears and your eyes and dive into this work with us.

*In solidarity, Kim Churches, CEO AAUW*

In our La Crosse Branch, the DEI committee has been working diligently to expand our knowledge and implementation of diversity initiatives through presentations, written testimonials in our monthly newsletter, *The Current* and invited speakers to our monthly meetings. There is also an extensive array of materials on our branch's website: [www.aauwlacrosse.org](http://www.aauwlacrosse.org)

We know that our members care about issues related to DEI, and live and work with people from diverse backgrounds. Obviously, our branch membership does not reflect the diversity within our region. We are fortunate to have three universities, two large hospital systems and many non-profit organizations within reach of our AAUW La Crosse Branch. We would like to seek out other partners in the community to work with this initiative. Therefore, to broaden our perspectives and be more inclusive, we want to tap into your expertise and participation to collaborate with our community partners.

**Any member that is interested in serving on the La Crosse Branch of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, please contact June Reinert: [reinert.june@eagle.uwlax.edu](mailto:reinert.june@eagle.uwlax.edu).**

I hope to hear from you.

Thanks, from your DEI Committee: June Reinert, Erica Koonmen, Diana Moran Thundercloud, Carlene Roberts

## Historian's Corner

by Marilyn Hempstead (32 yr member), Branch Historian

### 50 Years Ago; Part 1

In honor of the 50-year members who will be recognized at the September Social, this is a look back at the year 1973. What might be a history lesson for some is memory lane for others of us.

#### **Here are some of the major events that took place:**

- President Richard Nixon's cover up of Watergate
- The ending, finally, of the Viet Nam war
- Floods along the lower Mississippi River

#### **In relationship to women there were these developments:**

- Roe vs Wade, the Supreme Court decision making abortion legal in the US
- Battle of the sexes in which tennis champ Bobby Riggs challenged Billie Jean King to three matches. She won all three.
- The Equal Rights for Women Act re-introduced into Congress by Representative Patsy Mink from Hawaii
- Women in US Legislature – no senators, 14 in House of Representatives
- Hit song "I Am Woman" by Helen Reddy
- Title IX of the Civil Rights Act had been signed into law by President Nixon opening sports opportunities for girls equal to that of boys in schools

Women were in the majority with a population of 108 million women out of almost 213 million total. In the workforce men made up 84% and women 73% and there was a big discrepancy in pay. Men had a median income of \$8,060 while for women it was \$2,800. Women

AAUW back then attracted educated younger married women with children, who wanted an outlet for their interests and talents, as well as professional women. Members were tuning into the Women's Movement, reading Ms. Magazine, working toward improving rights and opportunities for women and girls. One symbolic act of our branch was to list members own names rather than that of their husbands in the directory.



Stay tuned for more details about our branch activities 50 years ago in Part II. The Area Research Center at UW-L will have re-opened and I'll have access to the 1973 historical branch materials stored there.



1970's AAUW logo

## FROM THE TREASURER

Ann Brice

Financial Report as of  
August 25, 2023

Checking Account.....\$7,511.76

Scholarship Bridge.....\$321.00

## Thanks for Your Donation

By Jan Eriksen

Thank you very much for your contributions to the AAUW-La Crosse Scholarship Fund in conjunction with the 2023 Art Fair on the Green!



We raised over \$4,000 in member donations, plus a \$500 corporate contribution. This is in addition to the money collected in the donation boxes posted throughout the Art Fair grounds and other money earned through artists' booth fees, the raffle, and water sales.

You may have already received a thank you letter/receipt from the La Crosse Community Foundation. If you did not, please contact me at jperiksen@viterbo.edu or (608) 787-5946.

New SSP Session begins  
Sept 19

Self Sufficiency Program (SSP) is a free, pre-college program that provides participants an opportunity to explore academic and career interests in a supportive setting. Offered each fall and spring semester, the 10-week class meets Tuesday evenings on the UWL campus. Free childcare is available on-site. Applications are accepted at anytime.

More details at: [www.uwlax.edu/ssp](http://www.uwlax.edu/ssp)

## On The Web

by Barb Fischer, Branch Web Manager



<https://aauwlacrosse.org>

If you have not yet renewed your membership, click on the link below for information:

[https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/files/2023/04/aauw2023mem\\_dues\\_renewal-2.pdf](https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/files/2023/04/aauw2023mem_dues_renewal-2.pdf)

This link will help you with both mail-in and online renewal.

Art Fair on the Green online site is still open - <https://artfaironthegreen.org>

On our website check out the DEI information.

DEI Tool Kit – <https://www.aauw.org/issues/>

DEI Objectives – <https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/files/2023/08/OBJ2324final.pdf>

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – <https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/dei/>

Article on great women –

<https://link.katiecouric.com/view/63cc2341be0c7328a305c2adj9fi4.gcl3/9ad4ba5c>

## Membership News

by Barb Fischer, VP Membership

## Condolences

Our Honorary Life Member, **Joan Koonmen**, passed on June 10th, 2023 at 91 yrs old. Joan was the first chairperson of the AAUW Art Fair on the Green and was involved in many activities at AAUW such as designing posters and creating outfits for fashion show fundraisers. She was an extremely active person who did many wonderful things for others and had lots of hobbies. Our deepest sympathy goes out to her daughter, Erica Koonmen, and all of her family members.

At the age of 102 **Andrea Hansen's** mother, **Eleanor Hansen**, passed away peacefully on June 11th, 2023. Eleanor had a lifelong commitment to "be something for someone" and she meet each day with gratitude. It was said by a family member that, "By her example we are all better people". She will be sadly missed and we all extend our condolences.



**Beverly Bodine's** brother, Lyle Clarence Meyer, from Dousman, IA, passed on July 24th, 2023. Over the years, Lyle was active in the American Legion, VFW, and community events such as Derby Days and marching in the Memorial Day Parade. He was fondly referred to as "Mayor Meyer." Our condolences go out to Bev and her family.

## New Members

Welcome to our two new members who signed up at the "Art Fair On The Green"

**Theresa Moore**

935 Franklin St. West, West Salem, WI 54669

[theresa.moore@wartburg.edu](mailto:theresa.moore@wartburg.edu)

Phone: 608-792-3272

Theresa earned her PhD at University of California, Santa Barbara, CA. She is presently teaching at Wartburg College in Waverly, IA.

**R. Jan Fischer**

408 22 Street North, La Crosse, WI 54601

[jfischer9511@gmail.com](mailto:jfischer9511@gmail.com)

Phone: 608-780-5770

Jan has an Associates Degree from Western Technical College. He is presently retired.

A **Membership Survey** Is still being worked on and should be out soon.



Welcome  
Glad you're here!



## 65th AAUW Art Fair on the Green

by Carol Robertson, Chair

Once again, we did it!

Our AAUW Art Fair on the Green was held successfully on July 29, 2023 at Viterbo University Courtyard.

It took many people to make this event run smoothly and I thank all of you who helped in the planning and were there on the day of the Art Fair. From the Art Fair committee to all the volunteers who helped set up, put up signs, directed traffic, sold water, handed out programs, sold raffle tickets, answered questions, bought lemonade, and supported the food vendors, I am grateful for all of you .

Even if you weren't able to volunteer, many of you were generous in your donations to the Scholarship Fund. You can still participate by contributing to the scholarship funds. We will gladly continue to accept any further donations. The art fair is our main source of income to support the scholarships we give each year and because we made the decision not to charge admission again this year, we are relying on donations to fund our scholarships.

The venue was great and we heard many positive comments regarding the ease of getting around, good parking, and what a lovely spot to hold an art fair.

The financials are not finalized but we will let you know when they are. The good news is that the donation boxes were much fuller than last year - 2021 the total in the boxes was \$1807 and in 2022 it was \$4032, and in 2023 it was \$4724!. Also the total for donations from members and friends of the art fair contributed \$4535, plus a donation from Marine Credit Union contributed another \$500.. Raffle proceeds were \$1,111. Thank you to everyone and especially to the art fair committee:

### 2023 Art Fair Committee

Artists - Erica Koonmen, Sharon De Cicco  
 Awards/Scholarships – Jan Eriksen  
 Concessions – Betty Kruck, Francie Ball  
 Garbology - George Kruck,  
 Grounds – Carol Robertson, Robert Richardson  
 Program – Robert Richardson  
 Publicity – Cindy Mishnick, Cheri Niedzwiecki, Pat Turner  
 Raffle – Karen Landstrom, Sarah Stuber  
 Treasurer – Bev Bodine  
 Volunteers – Marla French  
 Website – Barb Fischer



If you didn't make it to the Art Fair, check out the great virtual art fair on our website. Thanks, Barb!

Looking forward to 2024! Thanks to all.

Carol Robertson, Art Fair Chair

