

# November Program

## Promoting Evidence-based Special Education in Kosovo

**Speaker:** Lema Kabashi, PhD.  
Associate professor, UW-La Crosse

**When:** Saturday, Nov 11

**Time:** 9:30 Registration  
9:45 Brunch  
10:00 Meeting 10:30 Program

**Where:** Viterbo University  
School of Nursing, Rm 195  
10th and Jackson Streets, La Crosse  
*Parking available in the lot next to the building*

**Brunch:** Cost \$12; pay with cash or check  
**Menu:** eggs, selection of pastries,  
potatoes, fruit, water, coffee, tea

**Please RSVP to email from Robert.**

The research project in Kosovo represents a comprehensive exploration into the Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS) for Infants and Children, with a focus on its reliability, validity, and utility. The endeavor comprises three successfully completed studies: Content Validity, Utility, and Curriculum Validity, while two ongoing studies, Interrater Reliability and Psychometrics Test, and Cut-Off Score, are actively advancing. The overarching objectives are to disseminate the instrument in Albanian and foster its adoption among educators, professionals, and parents in Kosovo.



I originally am from Kosovo. Currently, I live and work in La Crosse. I have over twenty years of teaching and advising experience and over ten years of research experience in the field of special education, particularly with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The focus of my research is finding effective strategies that promote social skills as well as increase appropriate behaviors and decrease inappropriate behaviors in young children with ASD.

# AAUW

LA CROSSE (WI)

# The Current

a publication of the La Crosse, WI AAUW Branch



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## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: **Inspiring Activism**

*by Andrea Hansen, Branch President*

Like you, being part of AAUW-La Crosse Branch provides me with an important channel for activism and organizing. As a predominantly white AAUW Branch, the work we are doing to learn and grow into a more diverse, inclusive and welcoming Branch is one of the best things we can do. I share the following example of an encouraging and inspiring community project from IA.

Yesterday, Jane Robinette, a dear friend from my Iowa State University college days sent me a link for the book launch of ***Racism and Resistance in Iowa***, published by Past Present Future Publishing, and crowd-sourced on Indiegogo. A writer and artist, activist and attorney-by-training, white and middle-class woman, Jane initiated this project as a response to the racist legislation that bans the inclusion of racism and sexism in teaching the history of Iowa and the U.S. in public schools.



Geared for teens and young adults, the tag line of the book is, "It may be illegal to teach the true history of Iowa, but that won't stop us from learning it." With intersectional feminism and anti-racism as a practice in her life, Jane began to seek out academics, educators, and community activists to

build a collaboration that could best tell the truth and encourage change. Rich in diversity of background and experience, this project was led by more than 25 BIPOC academics, educators, community activists, and artists. For 2 years Jane shared with me small snapshots of this dynamic, challenging and empowering endeavor. Jane, somehow, has the ability to turn outrage and sadness into principled and creative action. That she is an artist and self-described introvert adds such poignancy and power to Jane's way of being in the world.

[https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/racism-resistance-in-iowa-book-launch#](https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/racism-resistance-in-iowa-book-launch#/)

## BOARD WORK SESSION

Following the general branch meeting on November 11th, the board will convene from noon- 2pm to focus on dangling issues from Board & committee meetings as well as exploring opportunities/ideas for our branch going forward.

## NEXT BOARD MEETING

**Monday, November 6**

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](mailto:ahansen@uwlax.edu)

Get all the CURRENT news at our website: [www.aauwlacrosse.org](http://www.aauwlacrosse.org)

## Branch Book Exchange

by Carlene Roberts, DEI Committee

Do you have a good book in your collection that you would like to share with fellow AAUW members? Fiction or non-fiction?

We have in the past shared books at our December meeting. Would you be interested in using our own AAUW 'Little Free Library' which would be available for donations or 'adoptions' at each of our monthly meetings? Your feedback would be appreciated. We would start in January, after the December book exchange.

Watch for more information in next month's newsletter.  
Carlene Roberts, camcar876@gmail.com



## OPEN BRANCH POSITION

### Art Fair on the Green Chair

Contact: Carol Robertson

**Duties:** responsible for coordinating the planning and execution of the art fair event, including arranging committee meetings, communication with the committee, being available to answer their questions and concerns.

### My hope for the next chair:

I hope that this person would enjoy it as much as I have and feel the worth of the work that they would be doing.

### I'll help you!

I'll mentor you for the first year through the steps of what it takes to facilitate the event. I will then be available for questions that may arise and would continue to support you.

## Volunteers Sought for Enduring Families Project

by Rebecca Mormann-Kreiger, Project Manager



Enduring Families Project will produce storybooks depicting African American settler children in La Crosse area. Our target audience is 4- to 10-year-old girls and children of color in La Crosse, Vernon, and Monroe Counties. Children of color will see themselves in La Crosse history. And all children in area will see an active diverse community in the early history of La Crosse. To develop a healthy multicultural community, it is essential children see their diverse classmates as part of legitimate history.

Anyone involved with a large project has had the overwhelming nightmare of getting it "all done on time, on budget, and most of all without losing your mind." We can do this if we ask for help from people who are generous with their time and hearts. Enduring Families is asking for your help with a few jobs. Some will take longer than others, and some could become an on-going job with each book.

Please take a look. Is there anything on the attached list that may look like something that you may like to take on as a volunteer job? Please contact me at [mormannrebecca@yahoo.com](mailto:mormannrebecca@yahoo.com) for more information.

1. **Independent job; take the book on George Edwin Taylor and find all the primary documents.**
  - a. Most will be in the Public Domain, but we still need the documentation that it is legal to put the photo in the book.
    - i. Need a copy of photo and a copy of statement that it is in Public Domain/what library holds it/etc.
2. **Independent Research**
  - a. African American Social (Women's) Clubs in Wisconsin
    - i. Particularly in La Crosse area
3. **1-2 Presenter(s) for Children in the 19th Century Wisconsin**
  - a. Spotlight on Wisconsin Children
  - b. Mondays Morning at the Library, no date has been set.
4. **Group Curriculum Writing for EFP books.**
  - a. Grades 2-3
5. **Illustrators that could create Historical Color Book pages for Pre-K and Grade 1 to correspond with the EFP children's books.**

(These would also be used for study guide sheets grades 2-4)
6. **Writers who could tell the story on the bottom of the color pages.**
7. **Call large Bakeries and Milk producers for donations of cookies and milk for book readings; dates to be announced.**
  - a. Currently have 18 dates

## PROGRAM RSVP

By Robert Richardson

Thank you to the members who reply within the weeklong timeframe to Robert's monthly meeting announcement/invitation. Others, your reply would be appreciated.

## SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS COMMITTEE

By Robert Richardson

By November 3, AAUW scholarship applications will be posted on our website and sent to all area schools and colleges.

Members, please consider all the collegiate students you know; we offer a scholarship for a female, non-traditional student. Only AAUW members can nominate individuals to apply for this scholarship.

The SGC is looking for branch members to read scholarship applications during February. A member could serve on one or two subcommittees: Non-traditional students' applications, graduating high school seniors' applications, holistic nursing students' applications, Viterbo students' applications, or UW-L student's electronic applications. {Note: Our scholarship recipients at WTC are selected via WTC's internal processes}.

# STEM

by Annie Allen-Wyman, Chair

## Who Can Be A Scientist?

Excerpts from *The 19th*

[https://19thnews.org/2023/10/mb-ramirez-latinx-geologist-host-scientist/?utm\\_source=The+19th&utm\\_campaign=22a-9ea681c-19th-newsletters-daily-1016&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_a35c3279be-22a9ea681c-382897861](https://19thnews.org/2023/10/mb-ramirez-latinx-geologist-host-scientist/?utm_source=The+19th&utm_campaign=22a-9ea681c-19th-newsletters-daily-1016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a35c3279be-22a9ea681c-382897861)

Michelle Barboza-Ramirez, who is a paleontologist and geologist, is a woman of color who prefers the pronoun "they." They is the co-host of the PBS show, "**Eons**," a collection of 10-15 minute segments that are also streamed on YouTube, and viewed by over 2 million viewers including hardcore paleontology and geology nerds, high school and university students, and everyday people who are curious about life on Earth. They have a relaxed approach to science, which is a welcome sign for curious people --- and they bring representation and visibility to a profession that has long been viewed as stuffy, white, male, and out-of-reach.



"I never saw anyone that studied geology that looked like me," explained Michelle

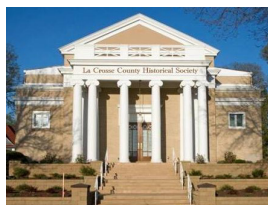
Jimenez, a former intern with Barboza-Ramirez in a community ambassador program directed by the National Park Service.

After a childhood in Los Angeles, visiting the Natural History Museum and La Brea Tar Pits regularly, Barboza-Ramirez didn't realize for a long time that they were actually practicing "science." They said, "I had always thought science was just like math equations or being in a chemistry lab with test tubes," they said. "I don't think I had a very good idea of what science is and what science does and what it looks like." Now, as a science educator, it's become part of their life's work to inspire the next generation of queer and Latinx kids to see how science can connect to their lives and in turn how they can influence science.

Learn more by reading the entire article – and by asking scientists "How did you get into this profession?" Who can be a scientist? YOU!

AAUW supports STEM professions and training programs and with its partnerships with educational institutions, helps reach out to the next generation of STEM professionals.

## Hearth & Home



After a hiatus of several years, the Hearth and Home study group is starting anew. The first meeting will be in November, date and time to be determined after a group is formed. We will be having a tour of

the LaCrosse Historical Society located in downtown La-Crosse. Following the tour we will have dinner at a nearby restaurant. If you would like to join us, contact Sharon DeCicco at 608-452-4571 or email at [sharon.decicco@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.decicco@gmail.com).

## Small Group Contacts

### AAUW IN ACTION (AIA)

See this page for meeting info

Contact: Erica Koonmen, [moogs56@hotmail.com](mailto:moogs56@hotmail.com)

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)

Contact: June Reinert, 608-461-1109

[reinert.june@eagle.uwlax.edu](mailto:reinert.june@eagle.uwlax.edu)

### CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS

3rd Tuesday of the month at 2pm

Contact: Alice Ross, 788-4206

### SCHOLARSHIP BRIDGE/CARD GAMES

Contact: Sharon DeCicco, 608-452-4571

[sharon.decicco@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.decicco@gmail.com)

### STEM

Contact: Annie Allen-Wyman 608-514-2871

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

### WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN GLOBALLY

Joint partnership group with Viterbo and UWL

Contact: Erica Koonmen, [moogs56@hotmail.com](mailto:moogs56@hotmail.com)

## 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.*

### Next meeting: Wed, Nov 1, 4pm, Main Public Library

We are already looking ahead at March and plans for Women's History Month 2024. The theme is: **Women Who Advocate for DEI**. We have some good ideas for activities and Annie will be heading up this work.

If you attended the September general meeting, you heard Zoe de Boer, Miss La Crosse Oktoberfest 2022 and a Miss Wisconsin contestant, speak about the changes to the Miss America organization contests to include changing the Social Impact Initiative to first 30 seconds of their private interview and introducing a fitness portion. We looking at this to see if there's something we need to take a stance on.

A new partnership opportunity is in the works: YWCA LaX will be hosting "Empower Women Summit" next March. We're excited to be involved with that.

## Women Supporting Women Globally

In a 10/15/23 post, Sona Kazemi, branch member and inaugural speaker in our WSWG series, wrote this stark reminder: **"755 days since the Taliban BANNED teenage girls from school & 295 days since they banned women from university in Afghanistan"** The oppression of women and other gender-based minority groups is a foundation of religious fundamentalism everywhere. Restricting access to education and knowledge is a key method of control.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

by June Reinert, DEI Chair

### An Interview with Sister Theresa Keller FSPA

taken from the FSPA newsletter



As a member of the FSPA Encuentro@theBorder Team, a collaboration of the congregation with organizations who are together answering the call to hold sacred the dignity of each person, regardless of origin, Sister Theresa recently sat down with the following questions about her ministry of immigration reform and offers reflection.

#### What do you envision for the future of the immigration crisis in the U.S.?

I am a firm believer that what we do today will be lived out in the future of tomorrow. Doing the same thing repeatedly — trying to fit the jagged pieces of a broken immigration system together — just leaves us with a lot of disjointed fragments. My response to the immigration policy failure in the United States of America as is similar to the abolition movement. The practice of holding asylum seekers in detention while separating children from their parents needs to be struck down, and many other practices of human rights violations must stop. Joining with other justice groups, talking with legislators, petitioning, and acting on immigration and promoting immediate action will move to just immigration policy.

#### What is immigration? Who are migrants? Who are asylum seekers? Who are the refugees?

Before we start conversations about immigration reform with our neighbors or contact our legislators for action, we must begin with the correct context. Sister Theresa offers these definitions provided by NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice.

**Immigration** is the process of moving to a new country or region with the intention of staying and living there. People may choose to immigrate for a variety of reasons, such as employment opportunities, to escape violent conflict, environmental factors, educational purposes or to reunite with family.

**Asylum** is a form of protection that allows individuals to remain in the United States instead of being removed (deported) to a country where they fear persecution or harm. Under U.S. law, people who flee their countries because they fear persecution can apply for asylum and become asylum seekers.

**Refugee** status is a form of protection that may be granted to people who meet the definition of refugee and who are of special humanitarian concern to the United States. Refugees are generally people outside of their country who are unable or unwilling to return home because they fear serious harm.

If you are moved to action, check out: [fspa.org/immigration](https://fspa.org/immigration)

If you are moved to be involved in our branch DEI committee, contact June at 608-461-1109 or [reinert.june@eagle.uwlax.edu](mailto:reinert.june@eagle.uwlax.edu)

## Historian's Corner

by Marilyn Hempstead (33 yr member), Branch Historian

### HuMANity

Phrases like “All men are created equal” were a puzzle to me as a teenager in the 1950s. It was explained that the term “men” could be synonymous with “humanity” and therefore include women. It was a matter of interpretation.

Now the tables are turned and the American Association of University Women has evolved so that the term “woMEN” can be synonymous with “humanity” and therefore include men. It is a matter of interpretation.



Dr. Richardson

In 1987 AAUW extended membership to men with college degrees. Thus, part of the current diversity in our branch includes the membership of three men: Dr. Robert Richardson who took advantage of the change early on, George Kruck who has been a supportive member for several years and Jan Fischer who joined this year.



Jan Fischer

And throughout our history, men have been involved with our branch in many ways supporting our projects and members: wives and friends.

Husbands of Bookfellows study group members banded into a Men’s Auxiliary in the 1940s and 50s. One of them printed the annual booklet. Another, an artist, drew caricatures for placecards at a black-tie dinner and painted a logo. Further, the husbands kept children from interrupting mother when she was working on her paper.

The AAUW Children’s Theater project, begun in 1959 and totally run by members faltered in the 1980s. Dr. Robert Joyce head of the UW-L Theater Department stepped in and offered student actors and production staff with performances at Morris Hall while under the AAUW umbrella. The connection continued until 1995 when Dr. Joyce retired.

In the mid 1990’s, lawyer Roger Imes made his office available for board meetings when his wife Sharon was president and even after she left office.



Charlie & George

The art fair has long counted on men for set up, take down, traffic control, ticket selling, etc. Remember George and Charlie the “garbalogists in their white coats?” When we despaired of putting up some complicated tents, Jef Jerde, using his military



Jef Jerde

experience, would set them up solo.

These are just a few examples of cooperative efforts of humanity, whatever gender, to promote the mission of AAUW.

We are grateful this Thanksgiving for that people inclusiveness.

# FROM THE TREASURER

Ann Brice

## Financial Report as of October 9, 2023

Checking Account.....\$7,487.76

Scholarship Bridge.....\$321.00

## YWCA Tribute to Outstanding Women Award

By Jan Eriksen

Branch member Erica Koonmen's daughters, son-in-law, and husband Jef Jerde, plus several AAUW-La Crosse Branch members, were in attendance as she was honored with an Empowering Women Award as part of the YWCA's 2023 Tribute to Outstanding Women. The event was held Saturday, October 7 in the Bluffs Ballroom in the Student Union at UWL. The printed program for the occasion noted:

Erica was nominated for this award for her ongoing support of women and girls through her work with the La Crosse Chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Known by some as "the engine" of the La Crosse AAUW Chapter, she advocates for increased awareness of women's rights locally, nationally and globally, while working to increase gender equity, economic security for women and girls, and women's education and success. She supports and provides critical guidance for a number of events and initiatives, while creating new opportunities to deepen the impact of AAUW in the area.

Many thanks to Betty Kruck for her nomination of Erica.



L-R: Jef Jerde, Jori Tentis, Erica, Tegan Jerde-Koonmen, Stefan Dorn

# On The Web

by Barb Fischer, Branch Web Manager <https://aauwlacrosse.org>



The 2023 AAUW Regional Conference in St. Louis had an agenda packed with valuable ideas, thoughts, and tools. More information will be posted on our website soon. Facebook link - <https://www.facebook.com/aauwwi>  
Guiding young women (or anyone) to the fantastic webinars on AAUW's National site is worth it. One example is "Where Money Resides: Demystifying Academic Job Negotiations". Go to - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sm21JhKEvWw>.

## Membership News

by Barb Fischer, VP Membership

### Member Receives Empowering Women Award

Erica Koonmen, our AAUW in Action Coordinator and Communications Chair, received an Empowering Women Award as part of the YWCA's 2023 Tribute to Outstanding Women. Erica is well deserving of this award, congratulations! Thank you Erica for all you do. See more information about Erica's award on this page. Thank you Roz Schnick and all others who supported or contributed to the success of this YWCA Award event. Thank you Betty Kruck for nominating Erica. Thank you Andrea Hansen and Jan Eriksen for writing the letters in support of the nomination.

### Member Recognized for Monarch Project

Roz Schnick was recognized in the recent Coulee Women's Magazine for her work on the Monarch Project. Roz is Ambassador for Rotary's Operation Pollination. She remodeled a guest cottage on French Island to serve as a place to hold meetings for her various community environmental projects. Recently more than four dozen people gathered there to witness the signing of a pledge to take action to restore and maintain pollination habitat and to protect the various insects, birds and other animals that pollinate plants.

### Welcome to Our New Members

#### Sona Hill Kazemi

706 Pine Cone Place, Holmen, WI 54636  
skazemi@uwlax.edu, 614-369-7172

Sona is a faculty member at UWL in the Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department. She presented an informative talk in April on "Understanding Iran's Feminist Revolution" that many of us attended.



#### Noreen Holmes

1213 South 26th Street, La Crosse, WI 54601  
agingadvocate@yahoo.com, 608-498-6606

Noreen is an Instructor at Western Technical College and was previously the Director at the La Crosse County Aging Unit.

### Condolences



Our condolences to Pam Thiel whose husband, John Charles Thiel, passed away on September 29th, 2023. Before his retirement he was an Environmental Biologist and was an avid fisher and hunter. Online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.dickinsonfuneralhomes.com](http://www.dickinsonfuneralhomes.com).

Our condolences to the family of Ruth Ann (Dunn) Knapp. Ruth was a long time member of AAUW. She was known for her metal work. Many of us have beautiful jewelry that she created. She passed on September 9th, 2023.

### From the Membership Committee

Information or suggestions are welcome. Please contact me at [fischerba@live.com](mailto:fischerba@live.com) or 608-780-1601.

# AAUW La Crosse Board Meeting Minutes

by JoAnne Revels, Secretary

October Board Meeting

10/09/2023

5:00-6:00 p.m.

**Members present:** Andrea Hansen, Silvana Richardson, June Reinert, Barb Fischer, Erica Koonmen, Kari Reyburn (Western), JoAnne Revels  
Andrea called the meeting to order at 5:00.

**Announcements:** Andrea congratulated Erica for being chosen as for the YWCA Tribute to Outstanding Women. AAUW members will attend the 10/7/23 Celebration.  
Andrea remaindered members of the Nov 2 SSP Locally Grown Scholarship Breakfast.

Minutes reviewed and approved.  
Agenda reviewed.

## Committee Reports:

**Program:** Silvana stated that 29 members, 5 guests, and 5 program only were coming. The speaker would be via Zoom. The speaker will receive a \$250.00 honorarium. The need for a budget was stated. The usual Saturday meeting: 9:30 registration opens, 9:45 Breakfast begins; 10:15 Business Meeting starts; 10:30 – 11:30 with QA, the last 10-15 minutes.

**Membership:** Barb reported that most dues were paid. We have 3 non-renewals. We have 5 new members including 1 student. Barb will recruit a photographer for our events and meetings. Sympathies were expressed to the family of member Ruth Knapp. We also extended sympathies to member Pam Thiel on the death of her husband. Discussion followed the need to develop practice for sending sympathy cards to members. Barb agreed to send these sympathy cards and discussion was tabled on donations and other responses.

**AIA:** Erica said that the next meeting will be 11/1, 4 p.m. at the Main Branch Library. There are currently no interns.

**Diversity:** June reported on their 3-4 hour retreat to determine objectives for next year. Ideas included a lending library at meetings of diverse persons feel a sense of belonging, and collaborating with other groups. Work continues on goals and objectives for next year. Members are reminded to complete the DEI questionnaire from in the Oct Current and will be at the meeting.

## Old Business:

1. Recruitment for leadership positions and involvement in committees need to be on-going. Ideas include inviting folks to committees and projects, on an individual basis; Kari suggested building in a committee meeting into the program meeting and encourage members to sit in to learn about the committee they are most interested in. Barb can flag new members' talents and interests and provide this to the committee chairs. Encourage members to shadow and explore committees. Recruitment for next year's officers and board members will need to begin earlier. Note: Workload of leaders and committee noted. Perhaps there can be some modifying of some activities, notably the monthly newsletter. (Perhaps alternating months for full newsletter and simple News Bulletin of dates/reminders)?

2. 2023-24 Budget: Andrea and Ann will work to provide a draft of budget to cover last ½ of year. (Jan – June 30). We are operating on the continuing budget from the last year (2021-22 budget). With segregated funds for the Art Fair and memberships coming through National, the budget is fairly simple. Still need to formally introduce and adopt, however.

## New Business:

In-person/Zoom Discussion: Pros and cons of both types of meetings noted. In addition, we need more time for board meetings, especially for some discussions. Idea: Scheduling a fall retreat for fuller discussion?

No other new business was discussed.  
Adjourned at 6:10p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by JoAnne Revels, Secretary