

## MAY MEETING

### Scholarship Celebration

#### Program Moderators:

Members of the Scholarships  
and Grants Committee

**When:** Saturday, May 3, 2025

**Time:** 9:30am Registration  
9:45 Brunch 10:15 Meeting  
10:30am Program

**Where:** Viterbo University  
School of Nursing, Rm 195

**Brunch:** Cost \$12; pay with cash or check

**Menu:** vegetable egg bake, pastries,  
potatoes, fruit, water, coffee, tea

*Please RSVP to email message from Robert*

As any of the scholarship application readers can attest, our scholarship recipients deserve this celebration! It provides validation that AAUW members expend valuable efforts in our annual Art Fair on the Green.

AAUW will host 30-40 guests at this celebration. We will recognize 20 scholarship recipients; each recipient has been invited to bring a guest. Meeting these enthusiastic young people is a meaningful experience for all in attendance.

Our branch does not charge the recipients or guests for meals. Historically, AAUW members have contributed to "sponsor" a recipient (\$12) or a recipient and guest (\$24). If you can participate in this sponsorship, you may pay in advance by sending a check to Treasurer Andrea Hansen or you can pay at the brunch on May 3rd.

Thank you for your generosity.

To extend our hospitality, we will reserve at each table-group one or two seats for a recipient or a recipient & guest. The mixed seating arrangement and casual conversation will provide a meaningful way for AAUW members to become acquainted with our guests and visa versa.

# AAUW

LA CROSSE (WI)

# The Current

a publication of the La Crosse, WI AAUW Branch



VOLUME 64, ISSUE 9

MAY 2025



#### PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

### **Uplifting Each Other**

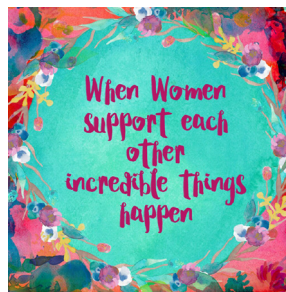
by Lema Kabashi, Branch President

This May, we proudly celebrate AAUW grant and scholarship recipients, women and girls whose educational journeys are being supported, encouraged, and uplifted by our branch and by AAUW nationwide. For more than a century, AAUW has played a key role in advancing education and professional opportunities for women both in the U.S. and around the globe. Our La Crosse Branch carries that legacy forward by awarding local scholarships and providing grants to nonprofit agencies working to improve the lives of women and girls in our community.

Each year, AAUW-La Crosse supports women and girls through a variety of efforts. We offer scholarships to graduating seniors from local high schools, students continuing their education at Western Technical College, UW-La Crosse, and Viterbo University, as well as recipients of the Tribune Extra Effort Award and non-traditional students pursuing new opportunities. In addition to scholarships, we fund local programs and organizations such as the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders, the UW-L Self-Sufficiency Program, Brighter Tomorrows of Sparta, HOPE Academy,

YWCA La Crosse, New Horizons, and the Western Technical College Foundation.

Our support doesn't stop at local borders. AAUW-La Crosse has also helped launch international projects that align with our mission. I, myself, stand in the long line of grateful recipients of AAUW support.



In 2021, I was honored to receive the Karen Wilson award, my very first grant, which helped launch what felt like an overwhelming and underfunded project: the implementation of the Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS) for Infants and Toddlers – Third Edition in Kosovo. That small grant became the seed for a much larger initiative, which has already completed four research studies, with a fifth underway. I believe this project will impact the lives of many children directly, and many women, mothers and professionals, indirectly.

*Continued on Page 2 »*

#### NEXT BOARD MEETING

**Tuesday, April 29**

via Zoom at 5:30pm  
Zoom link available from Lema

Meetings are open to all members  
**To place items on the agenda or  
confirm your attendance,** contact  
Lema at [LKabashi@uwlax.edu](mailto:LKabashi@uwlax.edu)

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

## Uplifting Each Other... *(continued from page 1)*

What makes AAUW even more special, beyond the grants themselves, is the incredible generosity of its members. My Kosovo project received support from donors at a time when I had no other funding. Their contributions helped cover essential translation fees for thousands of pages of assessment materials, making the project's implementation possible. That kind of generosity reminded me of the deep power of community support and the importance of believing in someone's vision, especially when that vision feels too big to carry alone.

Whether it's through financial support, mentorship, or simply cheering others on, AAUW members truly embody the mission of our organization in meaningful, everyday ways. That spirit is what keeps our work going and our impact growing.

As we celebrate this year's scholarship and grant recipients, I invite you to reflect on the powerful legacy we are part of. Every contribution, whether it's a dollar, an hour, or a word of encouragement, builds the foundation for someone else's success. Thank you for being part of that legacy, and for continuing to uplift women and girls in our community and beyond.

## NAME GRANT RECIPIENTS 2025

The La Crosse Branch was fortunate this year to award two Name Grants, announced at the April 12 branch meeting. The honorees are **Lema Kabashi** and **Diana Moran Thundercloud**.

Lema is finishing her first of two years as branch president. She is an outstanding president: energetic, enthusiastic, and well-organized. Despite her full-time position as a faculty member at UWL, she was willing to accept the nomination as president-elect, then president. Each month she researches and writes about timely and important issues for The Current. Lema is an outstanding leader who runs effective board and general meetings.



Diana's nominator wrote that she is "... a woman who is passionate about helping others and dedicated to the AAUW mission of advancing equity for women and girls." Diana is the La Crosse Branch Public Policy Chair. In that position she writes informative Public Policy articles for the branch newsletter and attends AAUW-WI Public Policy meetings to stay abreast of updates on elections, laws, and rulings at the state and national levels. Diana is also a member of the branch DEI committee and has presented programs at general meetings on that topic. She

represents AAUW on the La Crosse Coulee Region Immigration Advisory Council and other organizations. Diana was one of the first panelists for the International Women's Day Celebration, sponsored by AAUW and other local agencies.

A donation to the AAUW National Greatest Needs Fund will be given in honor of these two women.

Thank you to their nominators, Robert Richardson and Erica Koonmen, as well as to the volunteers on the selection committee, Betty Kruck and Ann Brice.

## Convention Corner

April 25-26, 2025

A successful 2025 state convention was held at Stoney Creek Hotel. About 130 people attended and enjoyed great speakers, good food and opportunities to meet other AAUW members from all over Wisconsin.

Next year's convention will be April 17-18 in Madison--mark your calendars!



*Rep. Jill Billings gives opening remarks*

*New State Board Officers*



*Cake Pops by Rose*



*The Wall of Positive Thoughts and The Box of Despair*



## Membership News

by Barb Fischer, VP Membership

### A Special Welcome to Our Newest Member



**Amy Lein**, PhD from U of Minnesota.

She is an Associate Professor in Educational Studies at UWL.

2624 14th Street, La Crosse, WI 54601  
alein@uwlax.edu, 517-743-1414

### A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE & OTHERS!

We had great representation at the Welcome Table for the AAUW-WI Convention. Thank you to Ginny Brochhausen, Cindy Cassellius, Jan Fischer, Betty Kruck, June Reinert, and Carlene Roberts from La Crosse. Also, a thank you to Jan Lyon from Lake Geneva.

### Change of Email Address

Sarah Stuber's new email is  
sarahstuber5234@gmail.com



### Membership Committee Meeting

The Membership Committee will be meeting on April 30th at 4:30. Look for us at one of the back tables at Java Vino.

Everyone is welcome. Please let me know if you are interested. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact Barb Fischer at fischerba@live.com or 608-780-1601

### NEW MEMBERSHIP GATHERING

The Membership Committee is in the process of planning a New Member Gathering sometime in June. We will announce the date at our next meeting and/or via email.

## AAUW Backs Civil Rights Coalition Pact

AAUW joined [The Pact: A Civil Rights Coalition Unity Commitment](#), a civil rights coalition response to escalating threats from the Trump administration.

With over [170 public events planned](#) to mark the administration's 100th day next week, we urge branches to review our [new demonstration guidance](#).

AAUW also launched two new funds — Public Policy and Defend Higher Education.

We encourage you to watch the training on [meeting with lawmakers](#) and check out our [policy updates](#).



The Leadership Conference  
on Civil and Human Rights

## Small Group Contacts

### AAUW IN ACTION (AIA)

See this page for meeting info

Contact: Erica Koonmen, moogs56@hotmail.com

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)

Contact: June Reinert, 608-461-1109

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

### STEM

Contact: Annie Allen-Wyman 608-514-2871

therosyorb@gmail.com

### WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN GLOBALLY

Joint partnership group with Viterbo and UWL

Contact: Erica Koonmen, moogs56@hotmail.co

## 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: Potluck @ Erica's, TBA**

### Equal Pay Day Event

We had a great Equal Pay Day Awareness table at Viterbo University on Tuesday, April 8th. It was a nice day so the table was outside and quite a few students stopped at the table to talk with our AAUW branch members Betty Kruck, Pam Thiel and Annie Allen-Wyman as well as students from the Viterbo DEI department. The DEI students created an Equal Pay Day trivia game that was a hit! Also popular were the sugar cookies with a "bite" out of them, representing the bite in pay women take.

Thank you to Melissa Giefer, Viterbo University DEI Dept, for arranging the location and the students who helped at the table that day.



Thank you, too, to the cookie bakers:  
Karena Norton, Susanne Koehler, Betty Kruck, Pam Thiel and Erica Koonmen.

*Equal Pay Day table at Viterbo University  
April 8, 2025*

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

by June Reinert, DEI Chair

## Are You Microaggressive? Take This Quiz and See.

Microaggressive? It's a word that reflects your ability to put down someone else in your words or actions without realizing you're doing it. Microaggressions reflect your unconscious biases, even if you consider yourself unprejudiced. If you're microaggressive, you might be making others feel uncomfortable in your presence.

While many microaggressions relate to race, gender, age, religion, nationality or sexuality, they can also appear when you simply don't like someone or when your self-awareness is low. We are always having an impact on others, whether or not we realize it.

Take this short quiz, which will simply provide you with a snapshot of your current thinking. Give yourself a "Y" for "Yes" and an "N" for "No" for the following statements:

- 1) When I go to a meeting with my team, I always sit in the same chair.
- 2) I have made assumptions about clients or colleagues that have been proven wrong.
- 3) Even if I don't say anything, I sometimes judge others by how they look or what they're wearing.
- 4) I have flat out told people they are wrong.
- 5) I often look at or reply to messages on my phone when I am with others.
- 6) I sometimes talk about people behind their backs, rather than discuss my criticisms with them directly.
- 7) I tend to botch foreign names, so I just shorten them up to make things easier.
- 8) I get along with everyone—after all, we're pretty much all the same.
- 9) I consider myself color blind.
- 10) I have told colleagues born in other countries they speak English well.
- 11) I have complimented a Black colleague on his/her intelligence.
- 12) I have commented on someone else's body or appearance to that person or others (including a compliment).

Quiz by Robin Silverman, Vice President, Principal Career Management Consultant at Right Management

### Scoring

Give yourself 8 points for each "Yes" answer. If you answered all 12 "Yes," give yourself 4 extra points for a total of 100. The lower your total, the better. If you think your score is too high, or if you've noticed that people seem uncomfortable around you, you might want to consider working with a coach who specializes in reducing unconscious bias.

### What Your Answers Might Mean

Here's why a "Yes" answer could be considered a microaggression.

- 1) Your Chair, or Your Comfort Zone? If you always sit in the same chair, you could be intimidating other colleagues. If you don't think so, next time you attend a meeting, offer "your" chair to someone else and see what happens.
- 2) Assumptions Limit Understanding. Assumptions are based on our judgments. Make it a habit to ask, not assume, anything.
- 3) Don't "Should" All Over Others. If you're thinking "You should...", you can be sure your judgment can be felt because "should" is a forceful thought. You don't have to like it; just accept that it's different than what you've chosen for yourself.
- 4) Who and What Defines "Wrong"? No one makes comments they believe are wrong. It's better to say, "how interesting! Tell me more" than to shut down the other person.
- 5) Are You Relating to Your Phone, or the Other Person? If you're using your phone, you are shutting out the other person. Make it a habit to put the phone away so you can build your relationship.
- 6) Gossip is Microaggressive. Talking behind anyone's back is a power-play. If you have something to say to someone, find a way to say it directly to them, or don't say it at all.
- 7) Learn New Names Phonetically. If you're concerned about saying a foreign name correctly, ask for the spelling, and then ask the person to sound it out for you phonetically. Write it down and practice it.
- 8) Differences Matter. While this seems like an admirable statement, it's a put-down. One engaging exercise is to have a conversation where the only topic is how you are different.
- 9) Racial Experiences are Not the Same: Discuss Them. Dismissing someone's race is akin to forgetting their name. It is better to admit that you don't understand their experience, and are open to learning more.
- 10) Heritage Isn't Always Obvious. While this sounds like a compliment, it's a microaggression because it's possible that the other person isn't from another country. Also, you're subtly suggesting that English is a better language.
- 11) Drop Stereotypes. Complimenting a Black colleague on his/her intelligence is one of the most offensive microaggressions. It reeks of the stereotype that Blacks are less intelligent than whites. Just enjoy the conversation and your relationship.
- 12) If It's Unrequested, It's Probably Unwelcome. Commenting on someone else's body is usually unwelcome, which makes it a microaggression. Even if you meant your comment as a compliment, unrequested attention often makes people uncomfortable. Keep your opinions to yourself.

### Transform Your Microaggressions.

Microaggressions can make you seem prejudiced or clueless. It can limit your network and compromise your career choices. But with a little extra self-awareness, you can transform every microaggressive situation into a microaffirmative experience for both you and the other person. Your relationships will be all the better for it.

**Scores in the next column**

## FROM THE TREASURERS

Andrea Hansen & Noreen Holmes

### Financial Report as of April 20, 2025

Checking Account.....\$ \$8222.61

Scholarship Bridge.....\$700.00

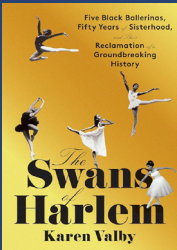
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## Recommended Reading

### The Swans of Harlem: Five Black Ballerinas, Fifty Years of Sisterhood, and Their Reclamation of a Groundbreaking History

By Karen Valby

Captivating, rich in vivid detail and character, and steeped in the glamour and grit of professional ballet, *The Swans of Harlem* is a riveting account of five extraordinarily accomplished women, a celebration of both their historic careers and the sustaining, grounding power of female friendship, and a window into the robust history of Black ballet, hidden for too long.



These Swans of Harlem performed for the Queen of England, Mick Jagger, and Stevie Wonder, on the same bill as Josephine Baker, at the White House, and beyond. But decades later there was almost no record of their groundbreaking history to be found. Out of a sisterhood that had grown even deeper with the years, these Swans joined forces again—to share their story with the world.

## On The Web

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

Please contact me if you need help on the Internet. 608-780-1601 or [fischerba@live.com](mailto:fischerba@live.com)



### DIANA ELENA MORAN SANCHEZ THUNDERCLOUD and LEMA KABASHI

Congratulations to our 2025 Name Grant Award Members.

Link: <https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/our-branch/name-grant-honorees/>

### AAUW-LA CROSSE SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION.

Link: <https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/scholarships/>



### PUBLIC POLICY SHOULD BE IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US.

Check out the informaton below:

Link: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/documents/>

### A GREAT WEBINAR ON HISTORY OF AAUW.

Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCGHf\\_w109Y&t=23s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCGHf_w109Y&t=23s)

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## APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR NCCWSL 2025 SCHOLARSHIPS

There has been some confusion this year about NCCWSL 2025. Several months ago, we received notice that AAUW National was no longer going to run the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL). Instead, it will be hosted by NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education). Everything else will remain the same: Washington, DC area location, focus on building leadership skills for women, and dates in late May.

The next NCCWSL will be held May 28-30, 2025, at University of Maryland, College Park. As in past years, \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded by the La Crosse Branch as well as by AAUW-Wisconsin for local college students to attend. Because of the late start, there is no "Early Bird" registration this year. One registration rate will remain in effect from now through May 28. Once the conference begins registration will be onsite at a higher rate.



For more information about the conference, please see the NASPA website at <https://naspa.org/events/nccwsl>. Scholarship applications are available at <https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/nccwsl-info-and-application/>. Students need to complete only this form for consideration for La Crosse Branch and AAUW Wisconsin scholarships. The application deadline is May 17.

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## Defending Voting Access

AAUW opposed the *Safeguarding American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act*, which passed the House on April 10. Americans already affirm their citizenship when registering to vote — the SAVE Act would strip that right away, blocking millions, especially women, seniors, rural voters, and communities of color.

Americans already affirm their citizenship when registering to vote. The SAVE Act would strip that right away.

It's not too late: [Tell the Senate: Oppose the SAVE Act.](#)

## AAUW La Crosse Board Meeting Minutes

Date: April 1, 2025  
Time: 5:30-6:30pm  
Location: Zoom

Present: Lin Rauch, Barb Fischer, Jan Eriksen, June Reinert, Diana Moran Sanchez Thundercloud, and Lema Kabashi

- Welcome
- Updates
  - o Diana Thundercloud will step down from the DEI committee - she was part of it for 3 years. She will step down from the Public Policy as well. Diana is interested in joining the STEM committee.
  - o Jan shared updates about the State Convention – Registration is ongoing until April 13th
  - o June suggested a retreat to discuss the overall goal of the organization
  - o Lin shared that Silvana and she will have a survey about programming that members will take during brunch next meeting. Barb shared that she has some data from the previous year that they can use for this activity.
- Organizing April meeting
  - o April Meeting Presentation was updated
    - § Discussed the organization of the meeting
    - § Decided on the time spend for each activity
    - § Reports: What is the committee about, what they did, and the call for expanding membership
- Next meeting:
  - o April 29, 2025 05:30 PM - Monthly Meeting: May 3, 2025 (First Saturday)
- Adjourn at 6:33pm.

## AAUW La Crosse Board Meeting Minutes

Date: April 29, 2025  
Time: 5:30-6:00pm  
Location: Zoom

Present: Barb Fischer, Jan Eriksen, Lema Kabashi, Erica Koonmen, Silvana Richardson, Lin Rauch

- Welcome
- Updates
  - o NCCWSL: Jan reported that NASPA has taken over the sponsorship of NCCWSL from AAUW. It will be held this year from 5/28-30 at the U of Maryland College Park. Applicants need to be full time students. We will offer 1 student a \$1000 scholarship; the state has 5 \$1000 scholarships. Deadline to apply is 5/17; these go to Jan. The links for more info and the application are in this month's newsletter.
  - o Convention: went well! Next year will be in Madison
  - o 5 star program: we will work on filling out the survey at the transitional meeting in May.
- Organizing May meeting: Robert has a printed program so no slides or other preparation is needed.
- Transitional meeting: for new board members to learn their roles and set goals for the upcoming year. Lema will contact Carlene about reserving Congregational Church on either Tues, May 27 or Thurs, May 29, 5:30-7:30pm. Potluck.
- Adjourn at 6:00pm.