

# SCOPE



**MONONA/MADISON (WI)  
BRANCH**

**Monona/Madison Branch  
Newsletter  
March 2025**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 25**

**6:30 p.m.: Social**

**7:00 p.m.: Program: “Women Grieving the Loss of a Partner: Physical, Emotional, Strategies for Moving Forward: presented by Kathleen Paris, Ph.D., a long-time consultant to UW-Madison and area organizations and businesses who recently authored a book on her experience of widowhood. She will share strategies that helped her navigate the grief journey as well as suggestions for how to support friends and family who are grieving. Author of *Gentle Comforts: For Women Grieving the Loss of a Beloved Life Companion* which will be available for anyone interested in purchasing a copy. Cash, check or cards are accepted. Retail price, tax included, is \$20.00.**

**Hostesses: Barbara Sorensen, Lynn Christensen, Gail Steinhorst, Jan Robertson**

**Location: Odyssey Center, 2238 South Park St, room 22, in the UW South Madison Partnership Building behind the Goodman Library.**

**Please bring your own beverage.**

**PRESIDENTS' CORNER, Pat Ruppert & Debbie Mahaffey**

We celebrate Women’s History month with the 2025 theme of “Moving Forward Together,” spotlighting women educating and inspiring generations. We celebrate and honor strong women past and present while we recognize, especially in our current environment, there is much work to be done.

It's also that time of year when we are tempted to think Spring is just around the corner. And yet we know the unpredictability of our midwest weather. Still, there is much to enjoy this time of year. March Madness for the sports enthusiast. And gardeners begin planning vegetable and flower choices and arrangements. And (hopefully) warmer weather and sunshine.

It's also an exciting time within our AAUW family. We're talking about officers, and committee leaders and members for next year, hearing of plans to grow our membership, and laying plans to enhance our community engagement. And the final stages of planning for AAUW State Convention, *Bridges to the Future*, are well underway. This year's Convention is being held in LaCrosse, April 25-26, 2025. Our members are encouraged to attend. It's an excellent time to learn from an interesting slate of speakers, and relax and mingle with friends!

Remember we resume our in-person meetings this month. Our guest speaker will be Kathleen Paris, Ph.D., addressing *Women Grieving the Loss of a Partner: Physical, Emotional, Strategies for Moving Forward*. We'll see you Tuesday, March 25!

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE, Sharon Knoop, Kleo Baruth Kritz & Gail Stirr**

Great News! We have our slate of officers for 2024-2025:

Sue Richter will join Debbie Mahaffey as our Co-President

Shiela Reaves will join Georgia Stilp as our Program VP

Jennifer Ondrejka will be our Membership VP, working with a Membership committee

Stephanie Sorensen will continue as Recording Secretary

Marian Ehrenberg will continue as Corresponding Secretary

Gail Stirr will continue as Finance Officer

Thank you to everyone for your cooperation with the Nominating Committee and to these members who are willing to serve as officers. We will vote on this slate at our April meeting.

### **PROGRAMS, Ellen Healey & Georgia Stilp**

The Program Committee will start its work on the 2025-2026 speaker program. If you have speaker recommendations, please let Georgia Stilp or Ellen Healey know via an email. Include the speaker's name, topic, and contact information.

**March Birthdays: Consuelo Lopez 6, Ann Bowles 8, Linda Voss 13, Lise Skofronick 16, Gail Steinhorst 21, Mary Michor 23, Brenda Smyth 23, Sandy Drew 24. April: Lynn Christensen 1, Mary Messerlie 1, Sally Keyel 3, Barb Sorensen 3.**



## FINANCIAL REPORT, Gail Stirr

February 28, 2025

**Beginning Balance 1/31/25: \$11,118.90**

1. Scholarship donations	\$55.00
2. Branch T-shirt orders	\$220.00
3. Great Decisions donations	\$140.00
4. Madison College lunch 2-13-25	\$279.90

(includes \$90.00 fundraising)

**Total Income thru 2/28/25: \$694.90**

- 
- Branch T-shirt payment \$301.07
  - Madison College lunch \$189.90  
(check reimbursed Val Murphy)
  - Madison Parks picnic shelter \$140.00  
(check reimbursed Linda Bergren)

**Total Expenses: \$630.97**

**Current Balance 2/28/25: \$11,182.83**

Our new Branch T-shirts have been delivered, and we are ready to wear them for future community volunteer opportunities! We have two shirts available for purchase: one size Large, and one size Medium. If you are interested in purchasing a shirt, please contact Gail Stirr. Cost is \$20.00 per shirt. (Other sizes will need to be ordered from the company provider.)

### Convention Is Coming Soon! Kleo Baruth Kritz

AAUW-WI Convention 2025 is just around the corner! *Forward AAUW: Bridges to the Future* will be held at the Stoney Creek Hotel, La Crosse/Onalaska, April 25-26.

**EVERYONE IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THE STATE CONVENTION – NOT JUST OFFICERS.** Please join us! It's an excellent way to meet members from throughout the state and hear about current issues in women's rights, public policy, and other important subjects. For more information, to register, and to reserve a hotel room, please go to <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/convention/>.



Here also is a Convention 2025 Promotional Video for your viewing pleasure and **only about 3 minutes long**. Do enjoy it! <https://youtu.be/mtMrLM8Exes>

A third keynote speaker has recently been announced: Meghan Kissell, Senior Director of Policy and Member Advocacy at AAUW National. Meghan's presentation is titled, "National AAUW Public Policy." Meghan has more than 20 years of nonprofit policy and issue developing and implementing targeted social impact strategies designed to engage key stakeholders and policy makers to advocate for positive policy outcomes. Prior to joining AAUW, Meghan led efforts to expand LGBTQ equality in the Deep South with the Human Rights Campaign. She also worked for the Conservation Lands Foundation, organizing local and national campaigns resulting in the successful protection of more than five million acres of public land. Immediately following Meghan's presentation Barbara Peterson, AAUW-WI Public Policy Co-Chair, will discuss public policy at the state level.

For the first time this year, AAUW Wisconsin is inviting non-members to attend the convention. So please bring along a daughter, granddaughter, sister, friend, or colleague. The cost of attendance is the same as for members and non-members can register in the same way that members do at <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/convention/>. Convention registration must be done online. Payment can be made on the website, with no service fee, using a credit or debit card, Apply Pay, or Google Pay. Alternatively, registrants may pay by sending a check via USPS. The deadline to register without a late charge is March 24.

[2025 AAUW State Convention Promo](#)

## **AAUW GENERAL MEETING MINUTES, February 25, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by Debbie Mahaffey at 7:55 pm.

The minutes of October 22, 2024, printed in the *Scope*, were approved as submitted.

**Finance Report:** Gail Stirr reported that we have sufficient funds to meet our pledged donation goals as well as our carry over funds goal for this year due to our very successful book sale and Christmas Party fundraising events. We have only given funds for Odyssey meals thus far. Our current balance is \$11,182.83.

## **Committee Reports**

**Programs:** Georgia Stilp suggested that we have one or two programs set aside, perhaps something we can offer ourselves, in case there is a last minute cancellation as we have experienced this year. One thought is movie reviews. She asked for further suggestions; please contact her. Ellen Healey asked for ideas for future programs. Kleo Baruth Kritz mentioned that last year there was a program committee that worked

together over zoom and she felt that a group is more productive and helpful in finding programs than trying to do it alone. Members for this program committee are needed for the 2025-26 year.

**Membership:** Jennifer Ondrejka discussed the handout she designed that was shown on-line which details reasons that we need to add new and younger members; retool our materials to emphasize our mission as well as be more colorful, snappy, and attractive; develop an “elevator pitch” about why someone should join us; explore what matters to new people and potential members as well as current members; determine our focus; how we should reach out such as on-line or with events; become more actively welcoming to new people. We need a small group to brainstorm each area before we focus on the details of how to actually implement this. Consuelo Lopez volunteered, but a few more people are needed. Please contact Jennifer.

**Public Policy:** Susan Slattery reported that the State AAUW committee met today for a lively discussion. She reminded us that there is a state wide election on April 1. There is an app called “5 calls” that suggests 1 call per weekday with suggestions of how to do this. Absentee ballots can be requested. Because we are a nonpartisan organization, we can state candidates positions, however we cannot tell people who to vote for - just to vote. There was also discussion that the Latina community is worried about deportation. Some of them have “special refugee status”, but Pres. Trump has revoked that in one of his executive orders. If you are interested in this issue, you can connect with people here in Madison.

**Scholarships:** Liz Senseman will be away this year for the scholarship ceremonies and Pat Ruppert has agreed to manage these for her. Pat reported that the UW Continuing studies Department has a complex process for selecting their awardees. They have quite a moving ceremony to make these awards and all of the applicants will receive something for going through this process.

**Fundraising:** Val Murphy reported that she was able to arrange one more lunch seating at Madison College for 4 people on a new date. She is working on a tour of Epic when the weather is better. We would like to expand the Fundraising Committee to include Civic Engagement/volunteer activities and do 3 or 4 such activities per year. This will allow us to contribute something to the community in addition to money as well as provide an opportunity to make ourselves more visible. We need a Co-Chair to step up to work on this going forward. Please contact one of the Co-Presidents.

**Newsletter:** The deadline for the next newsletter is Wednesday, March 5.

**Nominating Committee:** Sharon Knopp reported that the new Co-President will be Sue Richter; the new Co-Vice President for Programs will be Sheila Reeves; Stephanie Sorensen will continue as Recording Secretary; Marian Ehrenberg will continue as

Corresponding Secretary; and Gail Stirr will continue as the Finance Officer. We are missing a new Co-Vice President of Membership. We have found two people willing to serve on the committee, but not as a leader. Please step up - contact either of our Co-Presidents.

**District One Report:** Consuelo Lopez reported that there was a discussion of creating some kind of “virtual branch” for potential members who do not live near an in-person branch of the AAUW. “Membership equivalency” was also discussed as a means to include more potential members. Both National AAUW as well as our branch are interested in exploring this idea. Another idea was that perhaps high fees are keeping some potential members away - could we offer “scholarships” for lower income potential members? Everyone was encouraged to remind everyone to vote. Building volunteer opportunities, developing community alliances, and approaching other women’s groups are ways to potentially build our membership. Please send Consuelo any other ideas you may have.

### **Old Business**

**Community Volunteering:** Our first volunteer opportunity is to put together packets for Girls On The Run on Thursday, March 6 from 9:30 - 11:30. Please wear your T-Shirt. 9 women have volunteered, and there is room for 1 more - please contact Debbie.

**2025 State Convention:** Kleo reported that 39 women have registered as of today and she is hoping to have over 160 attendees. She encouraged our members to register and reminded the group that we need to put together a Branch Basket for the Silent Auction. Gail has a basket and is focusing on items that can be used for grandchildren from toddlers to about 8 years old such as games, books, etc. Barb Sorensen will again be designing our triboard for display.

**2026 State Convention:** Kleo is the State Program Co-Chair for the 2026 Convention along with Maggie Winz, who will be the Local Co-Chair, which will be held in our District. Debbie and Pat have volunteered to be on the Convention 2026 Planning Committee for Monona/Madison. The Committee will meet from September to May once per month on Zoom. Please contact Kleo if you are willing to help with this.

**Report from February 12, 2025 Board meeting:** Pat reported that in addition to other things that have been covered in this meeting, there was a detailed discussion of how to and who can update and maintain our website. One option considered was to find someone to set it up for a price, then continue to maintain it on our own. At this point, a decision was made to have Maggie Winz train Georgia and see how this goes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm

Respectfully submitted, Stephanie Sorensen, Recording Secretary.

## CALENDAR

- **Mar. 11 Film Group, TBD**
- **Mar. 15 at 6:30 p.m.: La Cuisine;** Mardi Gras: Host: Donna Anderson; Co-hosts: Liz Senseman & Pat Ruppert
- **Mar. 19 at 7 p.m.: Wednesday Evening Book Club:** Host: Brenda Smyth; Reviewer: Brenda Smyth; *The Women* by Kristin Hannah
- **Mar. 25 at 7 p.m.:** General Meeting
- **Mar. 27 at 9:30 a.m.: Morning Literature, Monona Library;** Discussion Leader: Sharon Knoop; *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride
- **Apr. 4 at 1 p.m.:** Bridge at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Monona
- **Apr. 25-26: State Convention**

Co-presidents: Pat Ruppert & Debbie Mahaffey; Membership: Kleo Baruth Kritz & Jennifer Ondrejka; Newsletter: Sally Keyel  
website, [www.monona-madison-wi.aauw.net](http://www.monona-madison-wi.aauw.net)

