



IOWA INITIATIVE

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SAVE THE DATE!
TUESDAY MARCH 18
AAUW IOWA LOBBY DAY
AT THE CAPITOL
10 am – 12 noon, Room 305
and
AAUW IOWA EQUAL PAY DAY
AT THE CAPITOL
2:30 pm – 5 pm
First Floor, Rotunda

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My Wish List Co-President’s Letter

Kim Folkers, AAUW Iowa Co-President

Wish lists are more commonly associated with Christmas gift-giving and New Year’s Resolutions, but as I’ve been stressing out about the extreme challenges facing our state and nation, some AAUW Iowa “wishes” for the coming months come to mind.



I’m wishing for....

- A record number of members actively engaged in advocacy at the local, state, and national level related to our mission – Equity for All – advocating for women and girls, public schools, libraries, the environment, affordable, accessible health care, reproductive freedom, and equal pay.
- Growth in numbers of AAUW branch members and branch activity that results in more local outreach, visibility, and community engagement.
- Significant AAUW advocacy on the scourge of human trafficking, how we can help put an end to it, and help victims in the meantime.

- Vigorous support for our Periods with Dignity project, building on existing initiatives and finding new avenues to make menstrual products available to young women in need.
- Meaningful, powerful collaborations with our Stronger Together partners that allow us to compound our impact on key issues.
- Continued work on making our Reproductive Kits available in key locations.
- Record involvement with AAUW Iowa’s Lobby Day/ Equal Pay Day at the State Capitol (March 18).
- Record attendance at the April 26 AAUW Iowa State Conference in Cedar Falls.

While this list may seem overwhelming, I’m encouraged when I note that many of these “wishes” are already being actively worked on by engaged AAUW members, many of whom have been committed to fighting some of these battles for years and bring their wisdom and experience to the process.

Keeping that in mind, the final item on my wish list is:

- Determination, endurance, and even a sense of optimism at times for everyone working to make these AAUW “wishes” come true!

Meet Us at the Iowa State Capitol on March 18

Public Policy News

Diane Kearns, AAUW Iowa Public Policy Director

I hope everyone is keeping warm. I'm definitely ready for spring. My article will be somewhat brief this time. There is much happening in the legislature as far as bills being introduced. Several have been assigned to committees that have not met. Of importance, we have rescheduled our Lobby Day for March 18. We will meet in Room 305 from 10:00 until Noon. This will be in conjunction with Equal Pay Day. A table will be set up in the rotunda to distribute information and also Payday candy bars. This will be from 2:30 until 5:00 p.m.

I have been monitoring legislation on a daily basis. The new committee on higher education is considering bills related to diversity, equity and inclusion. The Supplemental State Aid bill (SF167) was debated in the Senate and House and passed with a 2% per-pupil increase recommendation in the Senate. The House proposed a 2.5% per-pupil increase. The vote in the Senate was 29 yeas and 18 nays, in the House the vote was 58 yeas and 35 nays. The minority party presented several amendments which were defeated. That bill has gone back to the Senate.

Another bill of interest is HF76/SF175/HF391, which

relates to incorporating provisions related to pregnancy and fetal development into the human growth and development and health curriculum provided by school districts, accredited nonpublic charter schools, and innovation zone schools to students enrolled in grades seven through twelve. Lobbyists against this bill include Planned Parenthood and Family Planning Council of Iowa. It has been placed on the calendar for debate.

To review legislation that is proposed and to see the status, go to the legislative website, www.legis.iowa.gov. There is a section on that site Bill Tracking Tools and from there you can look at Daily Legislation. This is a very helpful area to track the progress of a bill on any given day. The First Funnel for legislation will be March 7. Even though some bills do not make it through the First Funnel, that does not mean they can not be resurrected, so to speak, and brought back for discussion and debate.

If you are planning on attending Lobby Day/Equal Pay Day, please let me know. The League of Women Voters and ACLU representatives have been invited to attend our Lobby Day as well. Stay Warm.

Gear Up for Equal Pay Day*

Mary Ann Ahrens, eNetwork Branch

We have an opportunity this year to participate not only in **Lobby Day** in the morning but also in **Equal Pay Day** in the afternoon at the Capitol. **We hope you will join us!**

Equal Pay Day represents the number of days women must work into the current year to earn the same wages men earned in the prior year. Women must work 14.5 months to equal the contribution of an average man's median wages. By the end of 2024, a woman was paid 83 cents to the dollar, a decrease of one cent from the previous year according to AAUW's latest research. Nationally Equal Pay Day is March 14. This is not just a date on our calendar, it is a powerful reminder of the work we still need to do to ensure fairness and equity in our workplace.

For far too long women in our society have been undervalued, underpaid, and overlooked in male-dominated industries and professions. It is a stark reminder of the systemic inequalities that persist in our

workplace. Equal Pay Day is not just about acknowledging the problem. It is about taking action, amplifying our voices, demanding change, and standing up for what is right for all genders.

We need to challenge the status quo, hold companies and leaders accountable and advocate for policies that promote fairness and inclusion not just for ourselves but for future generations of women. Joining us at the Capitol and being visible sends a powerful message to our legislators and staff. Thank you for making time to stand with us. We won't go back!

Strides have been made in recent years. Organizations are becoming more transparent about their pay practices and conversations about pay equity are happening more openly and frequently than before. We need to support initiatives that promote pay transparency, salary negotiation skills, and leadership development for women.

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Today it is vital to advocate for pay equity in your workplace with peer and management conversations encouraging the company to conduct regular pay audits and make adjustments to ensure equal pay for equal work. It is also important to advocate for pay equity legislation that mandates pay transparency, prohibits salary history inquiries, and strengthens enforcement. Engage with policymakers to raise awareness about the importance of pay equity. Lastly, even though strides have been made in raising awareness, we can become allies in the pursuit of equality. Engage men and young people in this

conversation. By educating men, we can foster understanding and empathy because they are part of the family economic picture. Inform young people about the impact of pay disparities as they prepare for careers. This can cultivate a generation committed to building a more equitable future for all. Let's keep pushing boundaries, breaking barriers, and building a future where every woman is valued, respected, and fairly compensated for her contributions.

**Source "3 Ways to Support Pay Equity as An Ally" by Julie Kratz, Forbes Adviser 3-12-24; American Association of University Women 2024.*



Come to the AAUW Iowa Spring Conference

Linda Morgan and Penny Foy, AAUW Iowa Program Co-Vice Presidents

Our AAUW Iowa conference will be on Saturday, April 26, 2025, in Cedar Falls at the Diamond Event Center. We will have a one-day conference from 8 am to 4 pm. Our goal is to have at least 80 AAUW members attend. Branch Members are encouraged to come in carloads so we can fill the hall with devoted advocates for human rights and all have a good time encouraging each other to work on the strong, equitable values of AAUW. As Iowa AAUW co-president Pat Higby said, "Let's have a Party!"

Located right off Highway 58 and less than 10 minutes from Highway 20, Diamond Event Center is part of the Western Home Communities, 5307 Caraway Lane, Cedar Falls, and is an easily accessible location for all guests. There is ample parking right in front of the entrance and everything is on one level.

A continental breakfast of fruit, Danish pastries, and beverages will be available from 8 am through mid-morning and a buffet lunch served at mid-day. The Cedar Falls-Waterloo branch is celebrating its 100th year and will provide a birthday cake. There really will be a party.

Morning speakers include **Steve Corbin**, a Cedar Valley free-lance opinion writer and columnist, with topics such as "Project 25 Poses Threat to Democracy" and "Maintaining a Democracy Is Not a Spectator Sport." A round table discussion will follow with **Susan Langan**, CF-Waterloo AAUW member, leading the discussions.

Afternoon speakers will lead with **Sarah Corkery** on "Why Did I Run and What it Took to Do it." **Shelby Davis** will

bring us some light-hearted theater, and **Sheritta Stokes** will give us an update on the 1619 Freedom School. In between, will be our annual meeting, awards and recognitions, and party time with the CF-Waterloo branch. Any other branches having significant birthdays?

All this for a registration fee of \$30. We are hoping the reduced rate will encourage many more members to attend. [The registration form can be found here on the AAUW Iowa website.](#) Your registration form and check must be received by April 9.

There are no plans to arrange for Friday night lodging, again reducing the cost of the conference. If you want to arrive on Friday evening, there are loads of hotels in the area for you to arrange your own lodging. Several hotels are listed on the registration form on the last page of this newsletter.



Introducing Our Spring Conference Speakers

Shelby Davis has been a regular onstage and off in the Cedar Valley since 2010, taking part in over 40 productions in the Waterloo Community Playhouse/Black Hawk Children's Theater, Cedar Falls Community Theater, and several independent theaters. She attended Hawkeye Community College, where she earned an Associate of the Applied Arts in Professional Portrait Photography in 2020. She owned and operated SRO Photography, a High School Senior photography business, for three years following graduation. Shelby has had the opportunity to work for several area businesses and museums, including the Grout Museum, District, the Hearst Center for the Arts, and American Color Imaging.



Sarah Corkery is a small business owner, two-time breast cancer survivor, disability-rights advocate and community organizer. She has taken life setbacks and turned them into setups in life. Sarah was previously the vice president of marketing at Veridian Credit Union. She is married and has three children. She graduated summa cum laude from Wartburg College in 1998 with degrees in communication and business administration.



Susan Langan is a retired educator after working for 40 years as a school counselor and special needs teacher. She received her BA and MA from the University of Northern

Iowa. She will lead the discussion on thorny topics and help us process and talk through what we can do now as we go through the breakup of our democracy.

Sheritta Stokes, Co-Director, 1619 Freedom School, Waterloo, Iowa. Sheritta is pictured holding the Paul Mann Memorial Human Relations Award that she and the 1619 Freedom School received from the Iowa State Education Association in 2024. Sheritta is the 1619 Freedom School's co-director and curriculum coordinator. She is a veteran teacher with the Waterloo Community School District, interacting with a diverse range of students and grades. She will bring us an update on the school's progress since it started in 2021.



Steve Corbin is a freelance opinion editor and guest columnist and contributor for 181+ news agencies in 39 states. He receives no funding, remuneration, or endorsement from any for-profit business, not-for-profit organization, political action committee, or political party. His aim is a return to old-style journalism focused on research-based truth as opposed to current "my truth" style of journalism.



Officer and Appointed Positions for 2025-26

Janie Montang, Nominations Chair

The following names will be placed into nomination at the April 26 AAUW Iowa Annual Conference in Cedar Falls. If elected, these nominees will assume their new positions on July 1, 2025:

- Pat Higby, Cedar Falls-Waterloo Branch, Co-President Elect
- Mary Gill, eNetwork Branch, Co-President Elect
- Maxine Lampe, eNetwork Branch, Program Co-Vice President (Will be serving with Linda Morgan)
- Nancy Henderson, Cedar Falls-Waterloo Branch, Treasurer
- Rebecca Ahrendsen, Clarion Branch & eNetwork,

Membership VP (1 year position, replacing Elaine Kresse)

- Kathie (Kat) Farris, Indianola Branch, Past President, Nominations
- Anne Stansbury-Johnson, Palo Alto Branch, Nominations
- Sue Jorgensen, Cedar Rapids Branch, Nominations
- Kathleen Laurila, Des Moines & eNetwork Branches, Nominations
- Jan Creasman, Loess Hills Branch, Nominations
- Janie Montang, Algona Branch, Nominations

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In addition, the following members have been appointed by co-presidents Kim Folkers and Pat Higby. They will also assume their responsibilities July 1.

- Sarah Hedlund, Algona Branch, Assistant Website Director (request from Website Director Lois Enger)
- Karen Agee, Cedar Falls-Waterloo Branch, Bylaws & Parliamentarian (Leslie Moore replacement, retirement from position)



These names have been submitted by the current Nominations Committee:

- Kathie (Kat) Farris, Indianola Branch, Past President
- Anne Stansbury-Johnson, Palo Alto Branch
- Mary Ann Ahrens, eNetwork Branch
- Mary Helen Stefaniak, eNetwork Branch
- Sue Jorgensen, Cedar Rapids Branch
- Janie Montang, Algona Branch, Committee Chair

Getting to Know the Officer Candidates

Pat Higby worked as Energy Educator at UNI for 15 years before retiring in 2016. She recently moved to Tiffin, Iowa, but continues as an active member of the Cedar Falls-Waterloo AAUW Branch and Iowa's eNetwork. Her interests include traveling, weaving, quilting, reading, and gardening. Her passion is to make the world a better place for her children and grandchildren!



Mary Gill has degrees in speech and theatre from South Dakota State University and communication studies from the University of Nebraska. She retired from her position as a professor of communication studies and leadership at Buena Vista University in 2021. She has interests in history and writing.



Maxine Lampe has degrees in education and educational administration. She served as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, and school principal in various Iowa schools. Maxine is a past president of AAUW Iowa, and has held other AAUW leadership positions. Maxine enjoys travel and organizing.



Nancy Henderson has degrees in political science and philosophy from the University of Denver and education from California Polytechnic State University. Nancy has served in higher education in Denver, California, and Wisconsin before coming to Iowa. She was the dean of

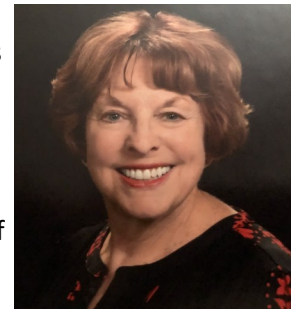
students at Hawkeye Community College in Waterloo before retiring in 2023. She held a variety of leadership positions in the Cedar Falls-Waterloo branch of AAUW. Nancy enjoys reading, books, and music.



Rebecca Ahrendsen worked as a nurse in San Diego, Iowa City, Des Moines, and Clarion. Currently she provides child care for her grandchildren. Rebecca does volunteer work in her community of Clarion, and enjoys swimming, yoga, and walking, and is a champion for the environment.



Janie Montang has degrees in education from Peru State College and Iowa State University. She was a guidance counselor in several schools in Iowa in all grade levels. Janie has served in a variety of leadership positions in the Maquoketa and Algona branches of AAUW. She enjoys reading, baking, speaking, sewing, and traveling.



Sarah Hedlund has a degree in communications from ISU. She works in healthcare industrial technology, and has done consultant work for several hospitals in the United States and Canada. Sarah manages the website for the Algona branch of AAUW.



International Relations News

Kathleen Laurila, AAUW Iowa International Relations Director

Hello to Iowa AAUW members...I have recently been appointed to the Board as the International Relations Coordinator and hope to re-interest you in viewing our work through a global lens. There are specific issues that are a part of our national AAUW public policy agenda, but the following global agreements and policies underlie the work we do here.

AAUW was a founding member of the International Federation of University Women in 1919, and we remained the U.S. representative in what became a 60+ nation federation of university graduate NGOs until 2004 when our membership was withdrawn. However, **international issues** (embed: <https://www.aauw.org/issues/leadership/global-connections/>) remain an AAUW public policy initiative, particularly through our United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) accreditation, which is a special consultative status allowing AAUW to participate in UN discussions and initiatives related to social and economic issues. And, of course, we continue to provide International Fellowships.

Similar to the remoteness we may feel about any advocacy actions AAUW conducts in Washington, DC, Iowa members may not see the connection to what AAUW does at the UN or with other global organizations. Thus, the international interest has waned. We do have a connection, however, with every issue we address at the local and state levels as “all issues are global issues” and what we address here is also being addressed by women around the world. The following UN agreements are the policies that AAUW supports and which do form the foundation for the “what” and “why” of what we do.

- The **Beijing Conference on Women** (<https://www.un.org/en/conferences/women/beijing1995>) took place in 1995 (First Lady Hillary declared “women’s rights are human rights”) and the U.S. Action Plan is in place. It is the global agenda for advancing gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, including all the factors leading to that advancement.
- Likewise, but not ratified by the Senate since President Carter signed it in 1979, is the UN **Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** (<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>). It is one of the most broadly endorsed human rights treaties (the “global ERA”) with only five other countries besides the U.S. not having ratified it. Among other issues of discrimination, it is designed to end violence, poverty, and the lack of legal protections for women.

- The **Sustainable Development Goals** (<https://www.un.org/en/exhibits/page/sdgs-17-goals-transform-world>) were adopted by all UN members in 2015, creating seventeen Goals with the aim of achieving “peace and prosperity for people and the planet” by 2030. Among the seventeen are those directly related to our policies: access to health including reproductive care, human trafficking, and “Periods with Dignity” project; quality and access to (public) education including for refugees and immigrants (certainly a global issue); gender equality, clean land and water (a major Iowa issue), climate change, and peace, justice and strong institutions – democracy included.
- **UN Women** (<https://www.unwomen.org/en>) assesses the advancement of these agreements through the annual sessions of the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**. (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/csw69-2025>) In addition to the formal sessions in which the U.S. State Department and other nations update the agenda – with interaction from AAUW staff - up to 10,000 individual members of NGOs from around the world go to NYC in March for hundreds of workshops, sharing the status of and offering insight for “women’s issues,” gaining courage from each other. Many of the sessions are accessible online.

Some additional U.S. actions also affect our global concerns:

- A U.S. policy is again in affect wherein a “gag rule” is put in place by the President that disallows any USAID funding to go to a health agency that even *discusses* the possibility of abortion in their clinic.
- Our support has been withdrawn for our share of UN Security as well as agencies such as the Human Rights Council, World Health Organization, UN Family Planning (UNFPA), HIV-AIDS services (established by President George Bush), Relief for Palestinians (UNRWA), etc.
- The removal of references to “climate change” and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) both at the state and national levels, including at private higher education institutions, is creating havoc for all organizations.
- The loss of life-saving USAID funding around the world, an amount that represents less than 1% of the total budget – not up to 20% that citizens polled seem to think - has been cut by this administration. Surely we care about the fate of women and children beyond our borders.

Please contact Kathleen Laurila at klaurila@mac.com if you have anything to share or want to learn more.

Proposed Bylaws Changes

Leslie Moore, AAUW Iowa Bylaws Director

On February 16, 2025, your AAUW Iowa Board approved revisions to the state bylaws as proposed by the AAUW Iowa Bylaws Committee. These revisions will only be enacted after approval by two-thirds of the members attending the annual AAUW Iowa meeting on April 26 in Cedar Falls. You are invited to review the proposed changes and participate in the vote at the Annual meeting! Linked here is a [summary of proposed changes](#). Found here is the entire [AAUW Iowa Bylaws document with the changes highlighted](#). We hope to see you at the annual meeting!

Bylaws exist to help current and new members understand the structure and responsibilities of belonging to AAUW at the branch, state and national levels. Reviewing and updating bylaws can help each officer/member become aware of how your branch is structured, your responsibilities as an officer/member and the procedures/processes by which your branch functions.



In May of 2023, revisions to Articles I-VII were made by national AAUW, requiring each branch to update those changes in their branch bylaws. Branches are requested to edit their bylaws document to reflect the new, revised Articles I-VII at this time. They can be found in the AAUW Bylaws Toolkit under "[Model Bylaws](#)." This update does not require a vote of the branch membership.

In 2024, all Iowa AAUW branch presidents were

encouraged to lead an internal review of their branch's remaining bylaws Articles. This review can be done by a small committee or in any way the branch desires. Potential revisions and language changes are to be sent to the AAUW Iowa Bylaws Director, to ensure any changes do not conflict with AAUW bylaws and procedures. After that check is done, the branch membership may vote on their proposed changes according to procedures described in their bylaws.

One area to note - many branches have an article in their bylaws called INDEMNIFICATION. Please note that neither State or National AAUW provides insurance coverage for branch actions. If a branch wishes to purchase and provide some type of indemnification, such as liability insurance or Directors and Officers (D & O) insurance, that is each branch's local decision and expense. Being clear on what indemnification is provided by your branch is encouraged.

Our goal is to have updated, electronic branch bylaws documents submitted to our Bylaws Director by June 1, 2025. This will include new national bylaws Articles I-VII and any revisions your branch has approved to other Articles. If you have questions or need access to your branch bylaws document on file, please contact the AAUW Iowa Bylaws Director at AAUWIowa@yahoo.com. Thank you!



Are You Using AAUW Tools?

Become a Two-Minute Activist. Members of AAUW's Action Network receive urgent e-mail notices when their advocacy is needed most. With our online [Two-Minute Activist](#) tool, it takes just minutes and an internet connection to make your voice heard on issues impacting women and girls!

AAUW Webinars. Want to dig deeper into topics at the national level? Learn more about AAUW webinars here: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/webinars/>

AAUW emails. Do you want to make sure that you receive emails from AAUW? You can get back on AAUW's distribution list using [this resubscribe link](#).

Leader Resources and Tools: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/leader-resources-tools/>



2025 AAUW Iowa

Spring Conference Registration Form

AAUW Iowa is looking forward to hosting the 2025 Spring Conference April 26, 2025, at the:

*Diamond Event Center
5307 Caraway Lane
Cedar Falls, IA 50613*

Staying over the night before or after the conference? There are many hotels. Here are two suggestions:

- *Country Inn and Suites by Radisson, 2910 S. Main Street, Cedar Falls, IA 50613. Phone 319-553-5001*
- *Hilton Garden Inn, 7213 Nordic Drive, Cedar Falls, IA 50613. Phone 319-553-5001*

To register for the conference, print and complete this form, and send it with a check to the address below, or [complete registration online](#). Your registration form and check must be received by April 9.

*Deverie Kiedaisch
1025 Grand Ave.
Keokuk, Iowa 52632*

Name _____

Branch _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Members _____ \$30 Students and guests _____ \$25

Late registration (Received April 10-24) Members _____ \$40 Students and guests _____ \$35