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Oregon Mission
AAUW of Oregon promotes
advocacy, takes action to
empower women and girls,
and connects National
AAUW with branch
members.

Oregon News

Dear <<First Name>>,

Greetings from Ashland!

Now that our *Reach for the Stars* conference is in the rearview mirror, I would like to thank those members AGAIN who made this amazing conference possible: Nancy Brown for setting us up at the Boulder Falls Inn and Conference Center, arranging for well-priced rooms, and meal choices; Pam Shay for arranging for our speakers and setting up the daily schedules, Claudia Gray for her Parliamentarian support, Gloria Holland and her Salem crew for their tribute to 100 years of AAUW of Oregon, Peggy Shippen for her Volunteers First breakout session, Sharron Noone and Claire Berger for their Public Policy breakout sessions.

And an important reminder to all our members: In these tumultuous times — marked by political division, economic uncertainty, and ongoing threats to rights we've fought so hard to secure — the mission of AAUW is not just relevant, it is vital.

We see persistent wage gaps, underrepresentation of women in leadership, attacks on reproductive rights, and the continued struggle for access to quality education and healthcare. And while these challenges can feel overwhelming, they are exactly why our work matters more than ever.

AAUW is a force — pushing forward with research, advocacy, and education. We fight for equal pay because a woman's value should never be discounted. We invest in girls' futures through STEM programs, scholarships, and leadership training, because we believe in a world where every girl grows up knowing her potential is limitless. And we champion public policy that supports families, protects rights, and breaks down barriers.

We are not passive observers of history; we are active participants in shaping it.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, *"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."* And I believe — we believe — that arc doesn't bend on its own. It takes effort. It takes vision. And it takes people like you.

It takes the strength, passion, and commitment of our 900+ AAUW members — standing together, raising our voices, rolling up our sleeves — to help bend that arc toward justice.

So today and every day that follows, let's celebrate the work we've done. And recommit to the work still ahead.

Thank you for showing up. Thank you for standing up. And thank you for helping AAUW lead the way in creating a more just and equitable world for all women and girls. Together, let's keep bending that arc.

Catherine Lutes **President, AAUW of Oregon**



The Lebanon conference: *Reach for the Stars* celebrates 100 years of equity work for AAUW of Oregon.

The meeting was opened with remarks by President Catherine Lutes, followed by remarks from Rebecca Grizzle, Executive Director of the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce. An inspirational talk by artist, activist, and Oregon treasure, Betty La Duke kicked off the beginning of a wonderful conference full of passion, progress, and possibility. After a no-host social and dinner, we were treated to a centennial anniversary performance, highlighting the work our Oregon branches have accomplished over the past 100 years. The performance, with humor, explored the serious work of advocating for women through education, research, and even lobbying.

On Saturday, we started with the annual business meeting as outlined in our bylaws. We elected Mary Pat Silveira (Lake Oswego) as our president-elect, Wendy Cook (Eugene-Lane County) as our finance vice president, Marty Maharg (Lake Oswego) as North Central district director, Monica Weyhe (Medford) as South district director. Marie Mueller will continue as our secretary. Marisa Fink (Roseburg) was appointed to the position of events coordinator, and Sheila Ramerman (Eugene-Lane Branch) has accepted the position of AAUW Funds chair. We do still need a program vice president and a parliamentarian (Claudia Gray thankfully filled that position temporarily for the conference). Feel free to contact Catherine Lutes regarding interest in these positions.

After the business meeting, we were treated to an amazing documentary by filmmaker Sandy Cummings called *Space, Hope and Charity*, following Charity Woodrum's remarkable journey through poverty and tragedy as she chased her dream of becoming a NASA astrophysicist. Charity and Sandy answered questions during our lunch. This was followed by an uplifting talk from Senator Deb Patterson, who shared legislative priorities and current issues that align with AAUW's mission. Talk about a full and dynamic schedule. We even had an impromptu auction! Dolores Mlynarczyk donated the President's Quilt and it was auctioned off for AAUW Funds, earning \$300.

Breakout sessions included a public policy workshop on the heels of Sen Patterson's talk, a hands-on celebration of STEM in libraries, a look at women military veterans and acknowledging their service through community and connections, a presentation of *Volunteers First*, highlighting the personal motivators that drive AAUW members' choices for volunteering, engaging and leading; keeping AAUW and our mission alive well into the future. We also heard from Deborah Arthur, the founder and Nahlee Suvanvej, the current director, of the PSU *Higher Education in Prison Program* at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Their vision is a community where the transformative power of education is accessible to all, changing lives, opening doors, reducing recidivism, and enhancing community safety and well-being. (These two women were recipients of our Breaking Barriers award later in the evening.) We also heard from a panel of women filmmakers, all of whom strive to make the world a better place through their passionate commitment to creating excellent films.

During dinner, the Breaking Barriers award was given to Deborah Arthur and

Nahlee Suvanvej, and everyone was able to hear about this very important and groundbreaking program, after which we heard from an AAUW Fellow, Barbara Hudson-Hanley, and how her AAUW Fellowship (AAUW is the largest funder of post-graduate fellowships for women) supported her PhD program, and how her interests focus on evaluating policies to protect human health.

AAUW Funds awards were given, including Top Ten Branches, Branch and State Named Gift Honorees, and Legacy Circle awards.

Catherine closed the conference with a quote by Martin Luther King:
"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

Keep being the light. Let's continue to reach for the stars — together.



What a busy time for public policy! The State Public Policy Committee members worked on several important projects, culminating in a highly successful Lobby Days. Here are some of the highlights:

The December 10-12, 2024, Legislative Days in Salem saw Salem Branch members and Trish Garner, AAUW of Oregon Public Policy Advocate, join AARP and others to inform legislators about HB 3187, the Anti-Age Discrimination Bill. We supported the issue in the Fall of 2024 by signing petitions in our branches and sending them to AARP through Trish to use in advocating for the bill. AAUW Salem Branch members held up a large AAUW banner and distributed fliers to event participants. Thank you Trish Garner, Peggy Shippen, Garlene Logan, and other Salem Branch members for representing us!

Public Policy Presentations were given at the Pendleton Branch, the Seaside Branch, and the Gresham Area Branch. The visits were highly productive and included information on the Lobby Days in March and the Spring Conference in April. The purpose of the visits was to help connect members to public policy and included ideas on how to engage in local issues as well as those issues that arise in the state.

The Legislative Reporters in the Public Policy Committee reviewed legislative bills in the areas of education and healthcare and selected six bills to advocate

for and present to legislators during the March Lobby Days meetings. We will be following their progress through the session. The bills include: HB3187: Anti-Age Discrimination; SB1098: Anti-Banned Books in Schools; HB3011: Early Childhood Education; SB694: Child Tax Credit; HB3212: Lowering Prescription Costs; and HB2233: Legal Services for Female Inmates at Coffee Creek. Updates on the progress of the bills will be shared with AAUW members. Many thanks to Sharron Noone, lead; Lisa Verner; Mary Pat Silviera; Ann Bard; and Susan Teel for all your work in this important area!

The Lobby Days Committee developed materials and provided training to AAUW members for conducting meetings with their legislators. Over 42 branch members, representing 11 branches across the state, signed up to meet with legislators and request support for our six bills. Over 24 legislators participated in the meetings. The 2025 Lobby Days event was held from March 17 to 21, featuring in-person and virtual meetings via Zoom, with a mandatory training webinar held on March 13th. We will continue to advocate for the bills through the Legislative Session ending mid-June. We are in the process of taking the individual meeting summaries from the branch participants and will evaluate the effectiveness of the event. Best practices will be used in future Lobby Days. Many thanks to Jo Rossman, Tricia Howell, and Randa Blanding for all your work!

We look forward to a relatively quiet summer and will start planning for the short 2026 Legislative Session this Fall.

AAUW of Oregon Public Policy Committee Members: Claire Berger, Chair; Sharron Noone and Diana Ricks, Management Team; Lisa Verner; Regina Braker; Pat Lehman; Randa Blanding; Tricia Hall; Jo Rossman; Mary Pat Silviera; Susan Teel; Ann Bard; Linda Lybecker; Claudia Carmichael; and Catherine Lutes, AAUW of Oregon President.

Submitted by Claire Berger, Public Policy Chair



Effective July 1, 2025, Sharron Noone, Gresham Area Branch, and Diana Ricks, Lake Oswego Branch, will be the State Public Policy co-chairs. Their term will run from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

Submitted by Diana Ricks, Public Policy co-chair



Public Policy had a great outing at the Oregon Conference at Lebanon. In a breakout session, Sharron Noone explained the process the Public Policy Committee used for the first time this year and brought everyone up to date on the six bills we chose for advocacy. We beamed the session via Zoom to all AAUW Oregon members. Lots of folks gave us good suggestions for improving next year and several people posted compelling testimony for the Age Discrimination and Anti-Banned Books bills.

Click [HERE](#) to follow the bi-weekly Public Policy update. I will post the update every two weeks until the end of the session in late June. As of Monday, May 11th, 3,432 measures – 3,277 bills plus other resolutions – had been introduced during the 2025 Legislature. The House had passed 238 bills; the Senate, 196. With about 51 days remaining in the session, much is left to do.

The **gloomy** Revenue Forecast **was made** on May 14th and **now** all four of our money bills will quickly pass or die. **We may ask that you write your Senator or Representative if the bills reach the floor of the Senate or the House;** if they are passed there, they go to the Governor. Thank you for your interest and, especially, your participation.

Submitted by Sharron Noone, Public Policy co-chair



District Directors

Having had a chance to visit and hear from all four of our coastal branches, I have observed strong dedication to the AAUW mission. Strong programs and the offering of scholarships seem to be the strengths of our branches.

Lobby Days was an experiment for Oregon with a few hiccups but such a novel way to boost important measures.

We have had two very productive President/Administrators meetings on Zoom. In addition, North Central District branches meet as an Inter-Branch Council (IBC), with the Hudson's Bay and Vancouver Branches in Washington. A representative from Washington and at least one rep from Oregon. We meet four times a year via Zoom and once in person. Each branch shares what they have been doing over the past two months. We also hear state

Seaside and Astoria Branches did have a successful half-day workshop at Clatsop Community College for both men and women trying to start or restart entering college. Of the 25 attendees, 21 entered the Spring Term.

April was a busy month for the Astoria Branch. They organized and hosted two Candidates Forums. Their community radio, KMUN and local newspaper (*Astorian*) really helped spread the word and recorded the forums for people to hear. They also volunteered for a Sunday of “*STEM Like a Girl*.”
Karen Beck, Seaside AAUW, NW District Director

reports from both Washington and Oregon. We are lucky to have the opportunity to share information on our programs and trade ideas.

Our branches, as you will see from the [included reports](#), have innovative programs that reflect our AAUW Mission or are community-related. All branches are engaged in funding scholarships for deserving students at our local community colleges. In addition, the members enjoy regularly scheduled activities like book groups, lunches, and walking groups, to name a few.

Marty Maharg: North Central Director



Governance

At our 100th Annual Meeting and Conference April 25-26 2025, the membership voted to amend Article XXIII of our [Oregon State Bylaws](#) by adding:

"Section 4. Technical Changes. The Governance Committee is authorized to correct article and section designations, functions, and cross-references and to make such changes as may be necessary to ensure the accuracy and readability of these Bylaws."

Submitted by Mary Pat Silveira, Governance Chair



AAUW Funds News

IMPORTANT FUNDS NEWS: AAUW has added **two new Funds**, specifically for those members who prefer to give their donations for higher education or public policy. The new funds are **#4513 Defend Higher Education** (“Your support ensures AAUW can effectively fight on behalf of women on campuses

across the country and ensure that AAUW remains a trusted and powerful voice for equity”) and **#4337 Public Policy** (“Support to this fund ensures we have the critical funding necessary to take swift and strategic action when the rights and freedoms of women and girls are under attack”). To find out more about each, go to the AAUW website aauw.org and click on “donate” in the upper right corner in red.

SPECIAL DONATION AWARDS - AAUW thanks the following branches for designating 100% of their 2024 donations to the Greatest Needs Fund: Albany, Ashland, Grants Pass, Gresham Area, Hillsboro-Forest Grove, Lake Oswego, Portland, Roseburg, Seaside, Tillamook, Wallowa County, and Yamhill County. The Gresham Area Branch received an award for having the highest percentage of their members donating to the AAUW Funds.



AAUW of Oregon 2025 NCCWSL Report

As many of you may have heard, 2025 marks the first year that the [National Conference for College Women Student Leaders \(NCCWSL\)](#) is no longer being directly hosted by AAUW; it’s instead being managed by NASPA, with AAUW expected to have a prominent presence at this year’s event.

First, the inspiring news: We are sending eight students statewide to this year’s NCCWSL, to be held May 28–30. Full scholarships are being provided by AAUW of Oregon (3), AAUW Gresham (2), AAUW Hillsboro-Forest Grove (1), and AAUW Salem (2). Each of our applicants (including a half-dozen who were not selected) exhibited stellar leadership qualities in their academic records and essays, making selection the usual challenge. Click [HERE](#) for a summary of the eight scholarship recipients for this year.

Submitted by Wendy Cook, AAUW of Oregon NCCWSL Coordinator



2025 AAUW Of OR State-Named Honorees

The State Named Honorees for 2024 were announced at the Awards Program on April 26th at the 2025 Conference & 100th Annual Meeting. They were nominated by members of the AAUW of Oregon Board of Directors and Branch Presidents and chosen by the Honorees from the previous year, 2023: Linda

Lybecker (Hillsboro-Forest Grove), Monica Weyhe (Medford) and Wendy Cook (Eugene-Lane).

Randa Blanding – AAUW of Oregon Communications, Oregon Online, and Lake Oswego



Randa recently relocated from California to Oregon and remains active in both states. She's been the lead for online communications and newsletters for multiple branches in both states. She joined our Board of Directors as Co-Communications Vice President and agreed to remain as the sole Communications Vice President for the past year. She manages email distribution, serves as the *Oregon News* editor, and utilizes the MailChimp account to support various communication groups. She created a new publication, *Sound Bytes*, sent most months for President Catherine Lutes to share information with all members.

In addition to her VP duties, Randa is active on the Public Policy and Technology Committees. She identified training for Webmasters to help Oregon and branches update their websites, built a database of all legislator contacts and sent a letter to each of them on behalf of AAUW Public Policy to introduce our organization. Randa also supported the Public Policy Committee by setting up Zoom meetings for the committee's many meetings, including training webinars for the 2025 Lobby Days Committee.



Peggy Shippen – Public Policy Chair, AAUW Salem

Peggy Shippen volunteered untold hours with California and Oregon leaders to create and present a program entitled "[Volunteers First: A Cutting-Edge Awareness Program for Leaders of Volunteers](#)" which is a new approach that focuses on research showing that certain leadership behaviors will result in a steady increase in membership, volunteer retention, engagement and leadership. She presented this at our 2025 Oregon Conference, and the video and handouts are now available online for everyone to access.

Peggy has also been an active participant in the Public Policy Committee, and you might also recognize her as an actor in AAUW of Oregon's 100th

Anniversary readers' theatre performance at the annual conference.

Claire Berger – Public Policy Committee Chair, Hillsboro-Forest Grove



Claire worked diligently with her Lobby Days Committee to develop materials and provide training to AAUW members for conducting meetings with their legislators, resulting in over 42 members representing 11 branches signed up to meet with legislators in person or virtually to ask for support of our top six priority bills during Lobby Days. This hybrid method has involved over half of our branches in reaching out to their representatives. Prior to this, the Legislative Reporters in the Public Policy Committee reviewed bills in the areas of education and healthcare and chose the six bills for which to advocate and present to legislators in the March Lobby Days meetings.

Claire also visited branches and involved many members in the process, helping to ensure that our Lobby Days will live on. Claire gave Public Policy presentations at Pendleton, Seaside, and Gresham Area to help connect members to public policy and engage in local issues as well as those arising statewide.

Nancy Brown – Events Coordinator, Albany, and Online Branch



In this last term, Nancy coordinated the 2024 Annual Conference by Zoom and another in-person conference for 2025 to celebrate AAUW of Oregon's Centennial. Nancy took on setting up a whole new online registration site, in addition to all the duties of her Events Coordinator position including site selection, creating an awesome graphic theme "*Reach for the Stars*", coordinating with the Program VP regarding speakers and needs, and Finance VP on registration and treasurer details. She set up the new site to include online payments and to download registration information to send to the Finance VP to decrease the Registrar's and Conference Treasurer's workload significantly.

Beyond this position, Nancy assumed the revamping of our state website with AAUW's updated tools, hosted webinars and training for branches to do so, hosted many other Zoom sessions for whomever had the need, created and

edited content for the website and YouTube channel. Nancy was always available to help with technology, communications, websites, and social media at the last minute. She has volunteered and performed many years of work beyond her job description.

Submitted by Monica Weyhe



THE AAUW PROGRAM

The AAUW Five-Star Program is designed to help branches align with AAUW's strategic priorities and advance our mission of achieving gender equity for women and girls. By participating in this program, your branch contributes to a strong network of advocates, elevating both your local impact and our collective efforts nationwide. Now you can be one of them! For more information on the program, visit the [Five-Star Program](#). Obtain the qualifying questions [HERE](#) and the checklist to prepare your answers [HERE](#).

At the AAUW of Oregon Annual Meeting and Conference, special certificates were given at the awards event. Salem Branch was awarded 5 stars in the national AAUW Five-Star Program – one of only 15 branches in the country to achieve all 5 stars in 2024! 3-Star certificates were given to the Ashland, Hillsboro-Forest Grove, and OR Online Branches. The Albany, Grants Pass, and Gresham Area Branches achieved 2 stars, and 1 star was earned by the Eugene-Lane, Medford, Pendleton, and Tillamook Branches.

Remember, just like the lottery, you cannot win a Five-Star Award if you don't enter!



Here are a couple of fun items to close out the *Oregon News*

The Medford Branch of AAUW of Oregon is again buying out seats at the Camelot Theater, 101 Talent Ave, Talent, OR 97540. Seats are for the October 1st performance of *A Tribute to Tony*



Bennett. Medford has 150 seats at \$35 each which will go on sale in late summer. Contact Sherry Schroeder at 541-778-7334 or ssch121647@q.com if you are interested in purchasing tickets.

Note: This was announced at the Conference, but the date and cost have been corrected.



I have a true story which I feel compelled to share. You can't make this stuff up.

So.....I recently vacationed in Klamath Falls, OR, and revisited the awesome Klamath County Museum, which features exhibits on the history and heritage of the Upper Klamath River Basin. (think Indigenous Peoples, logging, cattle ranching, farms, lumber mills, nature, community issues -- 'Twas interesting to gaze at a vast collection of old wringer washing machines!) The museum is housed in the very large Klamath Armory, built in 1935, which makes for an interesting footprint. Well, as you can imagine, my visit included a visit to the ladies' room -- old but clean. There were two commodes, and in the one I selected there was mounted a September 1945 newspaper page featuring -- wait for it -- [an article about AAUW!!!](#) Yes, I took pictures.

I queried the museum staff, but they knew nothing about the former AAUW Klamath Falls Branch. But.....you never know what you might find when you're out and about.

Submitted by Mardy Stevens



**Have a fun and happy Summer,
and see you in the Fall!!**



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