

September, 2025
Volume 75, Issue 1

HIGHLIGHTS

AAUW GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

7:00 P.M. MEETING & PROGRAM

CHARTER HOUSE

NORTHVIEW ROOM

3RD FLOOR

PROGRAM: THE JOY OF MEMOIR WRITING

SPEAKER: JANE IDDINGS

MARYETTE BRAITHWAITE 507-993-4162

ROSEMARY BRADSHAW 507-226-3945

PROGRAM VICE PRESIDENTS



ROCHESTER (MN)
BRANCH



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Membership.....	2
Calendar	3
From the President ...	4
From the Editor.....	5

SEE P. 4

For important information about updating your Yearbook directory listing!



MEMBERSHIP

For information,
please contact

Kathy Lawrence

507-285-9331

kathy-
lawrence@charter.net

or

Jo Trachy

507-269-0091

Trachy.jo@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM: THE JOY OF MEMOIR WRITING WITH JANE IDDINGS

Jane's passion is encouraging people to write their life stories. She has done so in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Sedona, Arizona; and during the last four years, right here in Rochester. She has writing groups at 125 Live, her church (UU), where she lives (Fairway Ridge, a senior co-op), and on her writers' blog, "Jane's Memoirists." (janesmemoirists.com)

Jane claims everyone has stories to tell. If we don't tell them, who will before these precious stories are lost? Jane will share with us a simple way to write our stories and get them printed into a hardbound book. Since March, 2024, she's been facilitating a new online memoir-writing process called "Storyworth" (storyworth.com) at 125 Live. She says your family, especially the grandkids, will love your book!

Jane's background: social work degrees from the University of Michigan/Ann Arbor and a law degree from the University of California/Davis; a legal career in family law/mediation in California; living, traveling, and working in Africa, Europe, and Hawaii; a handful of years living aboard two different sailboats on the East Coast cruising between Maine, Cape Cod, and Key West; and "Airstreaming" around the U.S. and Canada. Along the way she was a newspaper columnist in Arizona and Washington.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All branch members are invited to participate in any of the following groups. Please let the chair or discussion leader know in advance, if possible. Contact the chair, discussion leader, or host for additional meeting information.

BOARD MEETING—MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8—7:00 PM.

The board will meet in person at Fairway Ridge.

President: Barb Knutsen 507-285-5122 (home); 507-535-9175 (cell); bknutsen45@gmail.com

WHO'S WHO--NO MEETING IN SEPTEMBER

Chair: Joyce Wenz (joycewenz@yahoo.com)

BETWEEN THE LINES—TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2—1:00

Book: *Prophet Song* by Paul Lynch

Location: ZOOM

call or email Karen Krueger for more information, 282-6766 or brkck@charter.net.

READING PLUS- MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8--9:00 AM

Book: *In Full Flight* by John Heminway

Leader: Joyce

Location: Zumbro Lutheran Church

Chairs: Ruth Stroebe 507-271-3240 ruthstroebe@yahoo.com and Carol Hartley 916-712-8899 chartley2@comcast.net

AFTERNOON READING—WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10--1:00

Book: *Demon of Unrest* by Erik Larson

Host: Lynne Kirklin, Charter House

Discussion Leader: Marita Heller

Chair: Judy Auger (judy_auger@msn.com, 282-7922)

WORDS WORTH—WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10—1:30

Book: *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Location: 1900 Ballington Blvd NW #308

Chair: Mary Ann Kleis makleis@aol.com 507-251-4741

READING WITH A PURPOSE—WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24—2:00

Book: *The God of the Woods* by Liz Moore

Host: Ione Schloegel, 2837 Wellington Lane SW

Discussion Leader: Ione Schloegel

Chair: Julie Caesar (288-9209; rstgardener@gmail.com)

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY—THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25—1:00

Host and Discussion Leader: Maryette, 3504 Fairway Ridge Lane SW

Topic 1: America at a Global Crossroads

**AAUW ROCHESTER
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2025/2026**

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If you are interested in serving

On the board,

Please contact any current

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4

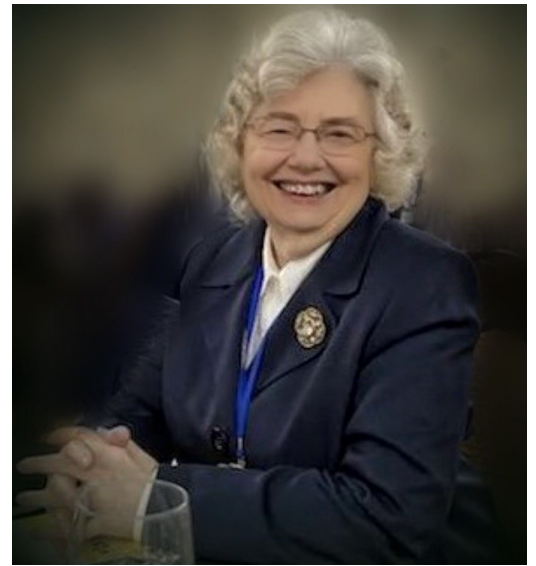
**FROM THE
PRESIDENT —
BARBARA KNUTSEN**

Barbara Knutsen

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507-285-5122

507-535-9175 (cell)



Welcome back to our branch meetings and programming for 2025-2026. I know our Program Vice Presidents, Maryette Braithwaite and Rosemary Bradshaw have planned informative topics for our general meetings and we can look forward to several dinner get-togethers which are always popular. Our Interest Groups will have thought-provoking topics to be discussed, and I hope you will feel free to join any one of them if the topic piques your interest.

From Gloria Blackwell, CEO AAUW

This year, higher education has faced profound challenges — from attacks on academic freedom to widening gaps in access and opportunity. But AAUW remains steadfast. For more than a century, we've championed women's education — especially for those from underrepresented communities. Today, our mission is more vital than ever. We're proud to be the largest non-institutional funder of women's graduate-level education in the U.S. Your continued support fuels our work. Together, we're defending education, empowering women, and creating conditions for equity to flourish.

YEARBOOK

The deadline for additions or corrections to the yearbook/directory will be October 15th. Send updates to Kathy Lawrence at Kathy-Lawrence@charter.net

From the Editor

Write—or read—a memoir

In recent decades, women have increasingly been able to be the authors of our own lives. We can own property, vote, apply for loans, have our own credit cards. Birth control methods have made it easier for women to plan the timeline of our careers and family lives. How many young women realize that many of these societal changes took place within the last 100 (or so) years? How will they know what it was like to live through the early years of these events unless we tell our stories?

At our September general meeting, Jane Iddings will share some ideas for getting started writing a memoir and reasons why you should consider doing so. If you're not a writer, or if you are looking for motivation and examples to emulate, you don't have to look much further than our own book groups for ideas. Perusing the lists of books to be read this year that you've sent me, I've noticed quite a few memoirs by women writers.

While *Dodge County, Incorporated* is mainly a work of policy analysis and social critique, Minnesota author Sonja Trom Eayrs blends memoir and activism throughout its pages. She writes of growing up as a "farm girl through and through" and experiencing homesickness when she left for Vassar College. She writes about family connection and legacy, growing up with a strong connection to the land settled by her Norwegian great-grandparents, and how corporate agriculture has eroded those bonds. She describes the harassment her family faced when they filed lawsuits to prevent a factory farm from being built near their home from her personal perspective and vantage point. She writes as both a participant in and chronicler of her subject matter.

Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin has been a popular author among our book groups. Her latest book, *An Unfinished Love Story* has been described as simultaneously a memoir, biography, and historical narrative, centered around her relationship with her late husband Richard Goodwin, an influential speechwriter for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, and their shared journey through the turbulent 1960s.

Several groups have read or plan to read *Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family*. While this book is not a memoir but a biography by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Amy Ellis Nutt about a young transgender woman, Nicole Maines has written her own coming-of-age memoir entitled *It Gets Better...Except When It Gets Worse*. I think it would be interesting to check out this memoir, especially after reading the biography.

Many of our members can possibly relate to growing up on a farm in rural Minnesota, going away to college in another state, or suffering the loss of a spouse. Some may have friends or family members who are trans. Reading books about people with similar experiences as ours strengthens shared values and helps us feel less alone. Reading about people who are from other backgrounds or have had different experiences helps to develop empathy for others.

AAUW and other organizations have fought for our right to create, live, and tell our own stories. We must continue to do so to ensure that future generations of women and girls retain these rights. I'm looking forward to our September program and hope to see you there. In the meantime—write something! Or read something!

Beth Nienow, *Highlights* editor

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Web sites:

National AAUW:

www.aauw.org

MN AAUW:

aauwmn.net

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You are receiving this e-mail as a member of the Rochester Branch of AAUW.

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

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