

Number 22
October 2025

The Lob Tree

AAUW Duluth

*Empowering diverse women through
friendship, education, and advocacy*



**Carin Skoog,
Director of Philan-
thropy, Safe Haven:**

"I just wanted to thank the Duluth branch of the American Association of University Women for your generous donation of hygiene products for our recent collection drive—we appreciate it so much! Not having to purchase these products ourselves helps free up funding for other critical needs."

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Diversity Matters by Branch Diversity Officer, Dr. Linda LeGarde Grover

Linda LeGarde Grover has chosen to write a book review for this Diversity Matters column

107 Days, by Kamala Harris (Simon & Schuster, 2025)

Looking forward to September 23, the release date for Kamala Harris's new book *107 Days*, I arrived at The Bookstore at Fitger's while the booksellers were getting ready to put them out on the shelf. I bought the one at the top of the pile and began to read when I got home. As I write this I am nearly halfway through; I am enjoying and appreciating Harris's sharing her experience as the Democratic candidate for the office of President of the United States during the summer and early fall of the 2024 election season. However, there is much more to the story, and to Kamala Harris: Her family is extended, their lives interwoven with America's history and current milieu, and her sisters, nieces and aunties very much like mine. That sisterhood parallels that of Kamala's sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha, one of the Divine Nine, the Greek organizations formed during segregation. Harris's description of her speech at the annual Zeta Phi Beta gathering in Indianapolis is vivid, illuminating and moving to read.



Save the Date: Holiday Social Event

Members and friends will enjoy seasonal appetizers and desserts from MidCoast Catering and music from Brian Kapp, owner of Encore Music Studios and Director of Music at The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary

When: Sunday, December 7, 2025, 2:30-5 pm

Where: Chapel, Lakeshore Ecumen, London Road, Duluth

Cost and Further Details: Forthcoming



UMD Poli Sci major ELLEN OGUNTI is an intern in UMD's Women's Resource and Action Center. Mentored by Linda LeGarde Grover and Susana Pelayo-Woodward, she attended AAUW's 2025 National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) with funding from the branch and state. She writes, "Thank you so much for the opportunity to attend the conference! It was a great and invaluable experience."

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News about Branch Members



A warm welcome to new member **LYNN ANDERSON**

REBECCA BISCHOFF (left) competing in the Northwoods Dressage Schooling Events on her horse, Fancy Pants. Rebecca's 1905 house was also featured on the 2025 Duluth Preservation Alliance's Tour of Historic Properties.

KAREN KEENAN AND PENNY SCHWARZE, members of the Four Fiddle Flute Friends, played their recorders at a performance at the Lake Vermilion Cultural Center.

ZABELLE STODOLA was on the committee for the 2025 Duluth Preservation Alliance's Tour of Historic Properties and researched and wrote building profiles for the tour booklet.

LUNCH BUNCH MEMBERS enjoyed a private tour of the College of St Scholastica's recently completed Student Center, led by Branch member and President of CSS, Dr. Barbara McDonald.

Spotlight on New Member Rev. Carolyn Mowchan



Pastor Mowchan retired in 2023 after serving in ELCA churches for 35 years. A graduate of Luther Northwestern Seminary, she was ordained in 1988. She and her husband, also an ELCA pastor, served together in

Roseville, MN, and Spooner, WI. They moved to the Twin Ports in 2011 where Carolyn served at Faith Lutheran Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church, both in Duluth, and Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Superior. Before seminary, Carolyn worked in educational, community, and professional theater after graduating from Gustavus Adolphus College in 1971. She is also a writer, publish-

ing with Augsburg Fortress Press since 1987. Currently she writes devotions for Augsburg, preaches in the area, and spends a lot of time caring for her two-year-old grandson. Carolyn is a musician, avid reader, and outdoorswoman. She is delighted to be a new branch member, continuing a tradition started by her grandmother—a college professor—who was an early AAUW member.

Focus Group Details, Fall 2025

Focus Groups meet regularly and gather together people with similar interests in a social setting. Newcomers welcome! Join as many groups as you wish.

The Lunch Bunch

Contact: Bonnie Edwards,
bkedwards@gmail.com

1st Tuesday of the month usually at 1 pm.

Members and guests try

new restaurants and revisit old favorites.

Roundtable

Contact: Dawn Conlan,
conlan518@gmail.com

3rd Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm.

The group meets in the Lyric Kitchen's private room to informally discuss a timely topic or a random

one submitted by members and drawn from a hat.

Zeitgeist Afternoons

Contact: Geiger Yount,
geigman@aol.com

This group views an agreed-upon movie usually at the Zinema and talks about it afterwards at Zeitgeist Cafe.

Literature Discussion

Contact: Angela George,
angela8744@msn.com

3rd Monday of the month at 7 pm. In person or on Zoom.

Members choose books to discuss for escape, entertainment, or edification. Contact Angela for the book list.

Scholarships Update from New EOF Chair, Kathy Antilla

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FUND (I.E. SCHOLARSHIP) COMMITTEE

The newly formed Scholarship Committee includes Nancy Aldridge, Jane Hovland, Linda LeGarde Grover, Rebecca Ropers, Zabelle Stodola, Marilyn Toscano, and chair, Kathy Antilla. Committee members met on 9/27/2025 to discuss the current guidelines for Branch scholarships which are only open for post-baccalaureate studies and have attracted very few applicants. The next committee meeting will tackle whether our Branch guidelines should change so that high school graduates or undergraduate students can apply. Chair Kathy Antilla welcomes input from all Branch members, Kathy.antilla@gmail.com

2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Branch awarded two scholarships of \$1,500. TESSA SCHUMANN is pursuing Doctor of Medicine studies at the U of M Medical School (UMMS), Duluth Campus. She has a BA in Human Biology from UMD. HANNAH REDDING received her Bachelor's degree from UMD and is continuing her studies there by pursuing a Master's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS BRANCH DONORS FOR FUNDING THESE AWARDS

Public Policy Highlights from Branch PP Liaison, Jackie Falk

LOCAL LEVEL: In 1991 National AAUW published the "How Schools Shortchange Girls Report." Our branch requested and analyzed the data from ISD 709. Analysis showed that while 6th-grade girls outperformed 6th-grade boys on their math achievement tests, boys significantly outnumbered girls in the 7th-grade *advanced* math classes. We spoke up and met the moment then. President Angela George now invites us to again meet the moment in this anti-DEI climate with creative solutions. Join her when you are invited.

STATE LEVEL: Betty Folliard told me ERA MN expanded to create a new coalition called Minnesotans for Equal Rights and will hold a big rally on the first day of the session, 2/17/2026, at 1 pm, in the state Capitol Rotunda. A Zoom workshop by the Hawaii branch clarifies that our state protections are our best opportunity. Betty says, "We're in a challenging time politically in this state, [but] we won't stop till we have an equal rights amendment."

NATIONAL LEVEL: Check this website to be up to date "Education doesn't end inequality – but it gives women the power to challenge it." <https://www.aauw.org/about/strategic-plan-2025/>



American Association
of University Women
Duluth

AAUW Duluth
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AAUW Duluth: Empowering
diverse women through friendship,
education, and advocacy

Website link:

[AAUW Duluth \(MN\) Branch](#)

See also [https://
www.facebook.com/AAUWDuluth](https://www.facebook.com/AAUWDuluth)

NAOMI YAEGER INVITES YOU TO HER BOOK LAUNCH!

Blooming Hollyhocks: Tales of Joy during Hard Times

Oct. 28, 6:30 p.m.
Wussow's Concert Café
324 N. Central Avenue, Duluth
Hosted by Zenith Bookstore

Naomi sits down with award-winning writer [Linda LeGarde Grover](#) to talk about storytelling, resilience, and the ties that bind communities together. Naomi's husband, Terry Larson, will play a few folk songs on his banjo.



Zabelle's Book Pick: *Heartwood*, by Amity Gaige (2025)

Amity Gaige is the author of four previously much lauded novels, two of which were *New York Times* notable books in the years they were published and which won other awards. Her new novel, *Heartwood*, promises to earn just as many accolades. Author Jennifer Egan judged it "Impossible to put down." Now that I have read it, I agree.

On the one hand, *Heartwood* is a thriller about a hiker lost in the Maine woods while trying to traverse the Appalachian Trail. So on this level, it is "an

inspiring wilderness survival tale," according to another reviewer. But it also concerns the complex mother-daughter bonds of its three main characters, through whose viewpoints the storyline proceeds. In the end, all three characters converge as the mystery is finally solved.

The lost hiker is Valerie Gillis, whose trail name is Sparrow, a nurse thoroughly burned out from her experiences during Covid. While hiking, she comes to terms with how she has idealized her mother and

whether she can save her faltering marriage. Lieutenant Bev from the Maine Warden Service is in charge of the statewide search for Valerie. She too is in the process of finding herself and forgiving her mother's frailties. Then there is Lena, whose daughter has cut off communication with her. Lena is an amateur naturalist in an assisted living facility, who loves nothing more than to forage in the surrounding woods, even though she has mobility issues.

Curious? Read this book!

