



AAUW Quarterly Newsletter

Dear Members,

Happy Holidays from your Board of Directors!

We have had a terrific year so far!

The Fall NCCWSL Fundraiser was a rousing success! Dr. Heather Shotton and LaShaye Clemons (the 2025 NCCWSL Grantee) were our guest speakers. We had record attendance, and the room was full of positive energy. I think everyone enjoyed the fare provided by Graze Colorado, so we will work with them again. Many thanks to Wanda Ellingson and Pat Petersen who chaired this event.

Thanks to your generosity, we netted \$2,100 for the NCCWSL Grant Fund!

The Holiday Open House was a lot of fun. We donated \$180 to Manna Soup Kitchen from the donations you put in the jar.

You can find photos from the NCCWSL Luncheon and Holiday Open House in this newsletter.

Our next event is the Spring Fundraiser for the Butler Falkenstein Scholarship Fund. The event will be Saturday March 28, 2026 at the Doubletree.

We wish you a Happy, Joyful and Peaceful Holiday Season!

Sharon Powers – Secretary Treasurer

Debbie Kurz – Membership Chair

Jill Donley – Scholarships and Grants Chair

Maria Doucette – Public Policy Chair



Meet a new board member

Maria Doucette, newly appointed Public Policy Chair for the Durango Branch of AAUW, is a proud Durango native who now resides in Mancos, Colorado. A graduate of Durango High School's Class of 1994, Maria began her higher education journey as a non-traditional student and mother of three.

She earned her Associate of Science degree from Pueblo Community College in Durango in 2004, followed by a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a minor in Psychology from Fort Lewis College in 2008.

Maria currently works as a social worker in senior affordable housing, where she advocates passionately for older adults and individuals with disabilities. She is deeply committed to promoting equity, dignity, and quality of life for all. Outside of her professional and advocacy work, Maria enjoys spending time with her family—including her husband, Tim, and their children, whose ages range from 13 to 31.



Meet a new member, Kathy Kolbe

I grew up in northern Indiana and graduated Summa Cum Laude from DePauw University in 1980 with a degree in Psychology. I then obtained a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology from Bowling Green State University in Ohio in 1982. I married my husband David in 1983 and enjoyed raising our six sons and one daughter as he developed his law practice. Eventually I became his legal assistant and business manager for many years until we moved to Durango in late 2023. Sadly, David developed pancreatic cancer early this year and died on April 12, so I am now adjusting to my new life here without him.



My main passion has always been music. I have served as organist in numerous churches since I was a teenager and currently play part-time at Summit here in Durango and also sing in their choir. I also serve as part-time pianist at UUFD where I see many lovely AAUW members in attendance. I have always enjoyed accompanying various choirs and recently began accompanying at Fort Lewis College. I am also the rehearsal pianist for Merely Players and look forward to learning the music to Into the Woods for their next musical production.

Want to be crafty?

Patty Joy is creating a banner which will represent our Branch as we celebrate our 80th anniversary. She could use some help from crafty hands. Please contact Patty if you would like to lend a hand.

Save the date

The Spring Scholarship Fundraiser Luncheon is scheduled for Saturday March 28, 2026 at the Doubletree Hotel. Watch your email in the new year for more details.

Want to plan a party?

2026 is the 80th anniversary of AAUW Durango Branch. We are gathering a committee to plan a party to celebrate this milestone. If you would like to help, please contact Sharon Powers.

New 2025 Members

Andrea Dalla	Jennifer Young
Kathy Kolbe	Sue Kirkham
Elizabeth Long	Daverille Sher
Sheila Rockwell	

Recent FLC Graduates now members:

Abi Jemison
Kathryn (CC) Shelon
Lia Young

AAUW Countdown



Fort Lewis College hosted its "Countdown to Graduation" event on November 13, 2025. AAUW Scholarship Chair and Board Member Jill Donley represented the Durango Branch with an information table featuring membership materials and graduate scholarship opportunities.

Throughout the four-hour event, Jill connected with many soon-to-be graduates, sharing details about AAUW National Fellowships, Grants, and Scholarships. We are excited to welcome three new young women who signed up to join the Durango Branch of AAUW. Congratulations to all the upcoming graduates!



Debbie Kurz, Faye Schrater, Sharon Powers & Kay Cornell Parr
- FLC Foundation Donor Breakfast in October 2025

Thank you for a great 2025!

