

*Preserving Our
Minutes*



Aimee Kaiser
2025-2026 USWT National Secretary
www.uswomenoftoday.org
secretary@uswomenoftoday.org

1st Trimester Secretary SIP

Welcome to the 2025-2026 Women of Today Year!

I want to take a minute to thank everyone who has given me support in moving on to the next chapter in my Women of Today journey. I am excited to serve for the first time on the national board. Allow me to introduce myself further for those of you that do not know me and I haven't had the opportunity to meet.

I joined the Pawnee Illinois Women of Today in July 2015 and quickly moved into serving my local chapter in various positions including Secretary, President & COB. I then joined the Illinois Women of Today Board as Secretary. I have also served as Membership VP, Programming VP and currently since 2023 as President. My husband Daniel has been alongside me since the beginning, always helping with whatever project our chapter was doing. In August of 2018 he became a member and jumped in feet first (maybe head first, not sure!!). Our daughter, Elizabeth is a new member of Women of Today and will be headed to college in the fall to study nursing. Our son, Brice is 21 and is trained as a distribution lineman who will be starting his apprenticeship soon. I am deeply honored to serve as your 2025- 2026 USWT Secretary.

One of my goals is to have at least 5 states and 10 chapters send me their meeting minutes and/or newsletters to review. Please email or mail them to me and I will review them and send them back with comments or suggestions. Those states and chapters that send me their minutes and/or newsletters will go into a drawing for a special treat at the Mid-Year Convention in Massachusetts. Please check out the newly updated USWT Website; uswomenoftoday.org and go to the secretary page. There you will find links for both the secretary guide and a newsletter editor guide to help you in your role as secretary or newsletter editor.

Be sure to complete your Fast Start so that I can get to know you.

Until next time – *Preserving our Minutes*

Aimee Kaiser

What is a secretary?

Webster defines a "Secretary" as "a person who writes letters and keeps records of a person, company, club, committee or the like."

In Women of Today, the "Secretary" is a member who is elected to record minutes of all business meetings within their respective chapter/district/state; keep a permanent file of all minutes, and perform other duties as outlined in the bylaws/policies, or requested by the membership.

Preserving Our Minutes

Minutes are for factual recording of actions taken.

Minutes should be written into and read from the permanent copy. They should be kept in a permanent book to prevent loss, and pages should be numbered. Or if done electronically, they should be kept in the chapter's files on Google Drive or Dropbox.

- **MARGIN:** leave blank margins on the left of each page - to allow room for corrections and/or additions. If done electronically, track changes when correcting the minutes.
- **TIMING:** transcribe minutes as soon after the meeting as possible so you will be able to transcribe your notes more thoroughly.
- **CONTENTS:** minutes should include:
 - Organization's name, time, place, type of meeting, name of presiding officer and names of those in attendance. List attendees by name (first and last) at the beginning. Then throughout the meeting you can just list their first name (and last initial if more than one member with the same name).
 - Approval (or correction/addition) of minutes and agenda
 - Treasurer's report: balance on hand as of meeting date
 - List of committees reporting
 - Action taken during on-going or new business (who made the motion, state the motion and action taken. If a vote was "counted" (as opposed to a general voice vote), the count should be recorded
 - Conclusion: "There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned", and note the time of adjournment
 - **KEEPING ITEMS OUT OF THE MINUTES.** There are two ways to do this:
 - Move into a "committee of the whole": only members of the organization are allowed to be in the room during discussion, and none of the discussion/actions/proceedings are recorded. Once discussion is complete, someone will move to go out of the committee of the whole - at which point any proceedings will then begin to be recorded.
 - If items have already been discussed, i.e. "on the record", a member may move to strike it from the minutes.
 - Minutes are not "respectfully submitted". . . they are read for approval. When minutes are approved it is noted in the minutes of the meeting where they were approved (i.e., the November meeting minutes were approved at the December meeting). Correction to minutes should appear in the minutes of the meeting where the minutes are reported on.
 - **REMEMBER:** the secretary is merely the "recording instrument" of events/actions. She does not have the right to interpret reports. Secretaries have no right to use adjectives in praise or condemnation of a speech, problem or refreshments served!

Hints for Taking Minutes

Develop a method of taking notes with which you are most comfortable.

Examples include:

Develop a generic outline that can be used for every meeting - filling in the sections as you take notes.

Use the agenda prepared for the meeting - and make notes within the spaces allowed.

Write notes on a separate sheet of paper.

Secretary Fast Start

A special incentive will be given to those secretaries & newsletter editors who accomplish this Fast Start by August 15th. I will have a special incentive at National Mid-Year in October. Completed forms can be emailed to secretary@uswomenoftoday.org

1. Send a letter of introduction telling me about yourself and include your theme and logo for the year if you have one.
2. Send your goals and a short statement on how you plan to achieve each of your goals.
3. Submit a copy of the minutes you recorded at one of your state or chapter meetings. If you don't have a meeting before August 15th, let me know which meeting minutes you will be submitting.
4. Communicate with your local chapter secretaries. Let them know that I am willing to help them in any way that I can including reviewing and suggesting ideas to improve their minutes if asked to do so. Please send me a copy of that email or letter you send to your local chapter secretaries.

Part of ***"Preserving our Minutes"*** is communicating with your local chapter secretaries. Let them know that I would love to receive a copy of their minutes any time during the year and am happy to provide feedback if they would like.

Newsletter Editors

If you serve as your state Newsletter Editor, please let me know so that I can add you to my list of newsletter contacts. If it isn't you, please send me their name and contact information.