

The Branch Beat

November 2021

Fort Atkinson Wisconsin Branch of AAUW

Upcoming Program

Diversity Committee

The Diversity Committee is pleased to host the November meeting at the Dwight Foster Library, 209 Merchants Ave., Fort Atkinson, on Monday, November 1, 2021. We will gather at 6:30 pm and our speaker will present around 7:00 p.m.

Our speaker is Leslie Brunsell from the Janesville AAUW Branch. Leslie has been asked to serve a two-year term on the State Board as DE&I Chair. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is a major focus for AAUW, and a new position has been created on the AAUW-WI Board of Directors to assist branches in focusing on this initiative.

Leslie has been a member of the AAUW Janesville for more than 40 years. Currently she is the Membership VP and has been Diversity Chair since 1995 when AAUW introduced the Initiative Adelante! Through the Adelante! Program provided by our National Association the Janesville Branch helped found the Diversity Action Team of Rock County in 1998 and continues to network with this organization on programs, training, and events.

Here we are in 2021 with a very timely initiative “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion with an

excellent resource provided by our National Association. The DE&I Tool Kit is available for all branch members to use when educating ourselves and our communities through our programming and written communications.

Leslie’s background is in education (taught for 9 years) and Banking (26 years in retail banking), she is now retired (“17 years and the best job I’ve ever had”). She says that the last 29 years a big focus has been in making people feel welcome in our community as they have had over 125 exchange students and international guests in their home.

I think we will find Leslie’s presentation very interesting. I hope we will have a nice turnout to hear her speak.



For more information of the DE&I Tool Kit, go to:

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/>

The President's Corner -

Kathy M

Happy faces and happy bucks! What a treat the October meeting was. To have a "normal" meeting, back gathered at the library like old times was so wonderful. Attendance was decent, there was 20 of us there, and I think as we get more comfortable being back in public in the future we will see more of our friends at future meetings.



"Happy bucks"! How much fun was that? What a fun way to get the meeting off to a positive and fun start. For those of you that were not in attendance, we have implemented a practice of starting each meeting with people sharing something positive that happened to them in the preceding month. A donation of a dollar in

the "Happy Buck" container is required to share. It was so nice to hear things going on in each other's lives! Full disclosure...the Happy Bucks idea was stolen from the Rotary Club, with acknowledgement.

All proceeds from "Happy Bucks" will go to Grants for Gals.

Plans for our Holiday Auction and meeting in December are still a bit in the air right now due to Covid. We will be meeting, that is for sure. But whether we will be having a live auction, or an online auction again is still undecided. We are also still undecided as to food for the event. We are leaving decisions to a little closer to the

event date hoping that the situation will make our decision clear for us.

Whichever way our auction goes this year, we will be looking for item donations from our members. Gift baskets, arts crafts, unused items...whatever you may have to donate please contact Donna L.

I look forward to seeing all at the November meeting on the 1st!

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Next Branch Beat Editorial Deadline

November 20, 2021

Next meeting will be the Holiday Gift Auction, December 6th at 5:30 at the Hoards Museum. Stay tuned for further details.



Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 4, 2021 – 7p Library

Kathy M. called the meeting to order.

Happy Bucks fundraising campaign for Grants for Gals: Every meeting the jar is brought out and members share good things that happened in the past month. The member that shares puts money in the jar. The trial run was a smashing success!

Recommendation from the Board to send a bonus \$2000 from the anticipated book sale proceeds to the Fort Foundation for scholarships.

- Grants for Gals has started a 501-3C and created a new grant that currently has little funding. This is a new, separate grant to appeal to a broader range of people and needs. A pitch was made to allocate some money for this fund.
- Some funds are already allocated to Grants for Gals in the approved Budget.
- It has been a branch tradition to support scholarships with book sale proceeds and that is how the Book Sale is advertised.
- Motion to approve the board's recommendation by Susan D., seconded by Carla C. Motion approved.

Kathy M. suggested that the Funds Committee should be invited to a future Board Meeting to discuss organization with regard to dividing funds.

5-Star program: By telling us about the '2-minute activist' app, we have earned our first star!

Book Sale: Over \$5000 in gross profit but there are still a few expenses to be taken out.

Purse Fundraiser is being revived and money raised will go to new Grants Fund. There will be a purse making night Wednesday Oct 20 6-8p at Marianne B's house. Contact Marianne B. to RSVP and for more info.

Special Events: There was a small discussion on if we should have an in-person Holiday event. A few suggestions were discussed including theme baskets, singing carols, online auction, and an in-person event with no food.

Program: Member discussed women who have influenced Public Policy.

Motion to adjourn by Susan D., second by Janine F.

Submitted by Brittany N., Secretary

Treasurer's Report

September 13, 2021

Last On-line Bank View: September 13, 2021

Checking Account	\$3,965.87	(\$1500 allocated to G2)
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Saving Account	\$2,019.97
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Expenses since

7/13	USPS – PO box 1 year	\$64.00
8/25	Marianne B. – backpacks	\$176.44
8/25	Lisa T.W. – backpacks	\$100.00
8/25	Opportunities – book sale flyers	\$31.91
9/3 *	APG (DJCU) – book sale ad	\$79.40
	Summary – payments - dues	\$841.00

Deposits since July – new fiscal year:

7/9	Donation from member	\$88.00
7/26	Deposit – from national – dues	\$26.00
8/3	Donations – backpacks	\$350.00
8/26	Donation – book sale	\$51.00
8/26	Donation – backpacks	\$91.00
	Summary – dues paid - debit	\$626.00

* Indicates expense/deposit not reflected in On-line Bank view

Planned Philanthropic Disbursements (previous fiscal year):

FA AAUW Grants for Gals Fund	\$1500
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AAUW Used Book Sale

The Fort Atkinson Branch AAUW has held its annual used book sale every year (except “Covid 2020”) for over 40 years. The sale is managed by a dedicated board, which began when Betty S. was chair. The board continued under the expert leadership of Ute M. who turned the chairmanship over to Barb P. Each of these chairs held their position for over 5 years. Before the used book sale board was developed, the chairs or co-chairs took on many of the details of the sale making the chairmanship a big job. This does not diminish the support and hard work of individual members before the board was formed. The development of the used book sale board has spread leadership responsibility over many.

Feeling that this long-term commitment of chairing the sale may deter future volunteers from taking on the chairmanship, I signed up to head the used book sale board for 3 years. This was my final year, as I had a “gap year” with Covid. Kathy M. has volunteered to co-chair, so our board is seeking the second co-chair position. Because Kathy is our president, it would be great if someone volunteered to chair the used book sale board. Many of us plan to continue on the board so there should be plenty of support for our next sale. Please reach out to me if you are interested in signing on to this position.

Mark Your Calendars

The 2022 AAUW Wisconsin State Convention will be once again held virtually. The 2022 Zoom Convention will be **April 22-23**, so get it on your calendars! It will be free and will be hosted by District 5 in the Northern part of the state.

This year’s Zoom convention was quite successful, despite it being the first time being held in a virtual format. so next year’s is sure to be even better. There is much to learn and take away from our state convention and hopefully you will all participate in some or all of the offered sessions.



Nicaragua Project

Around the turn of the century, 21st century that is, with Carolyn N. as our branch president, the Appleton branch had an article in the state newsletter requesting items to be collected and sent to Nicaragua for sewing centers there. These centers began in Nicaragua as a method for women to learn sewing and baking skills in order to make items to sell so they could support themselves and their families. Our branch members collected items to be sent to Nicaragua. Ruth Schauer followed Carolyn as president and the Nicaragua Project grew! We welcomed Lucy Harvey from Appleton to tell us what their branch was doing to help women in Nicaragua, bringing with her many American Girl doll dresses for purchase. These dresses were all made by women from the sewing centers in Nicaragua. They were meticulously sewn.

We learned that Fort Atkinson, WI is a partner city with Puerto Cabezas Nicaragua. This partnership began with Fort Atkinson community members, Hugh Highsmith, Glenn Lepley, Bob Martin and others forming a community group that traveled to Nicaragua in the 1960's, early 70's. Their history included donations and projects to support the very poor community of Puerto Cabezas.

With Ruth S. as leader, members of our branch joined others from Fort Atkinson and surrounding area to relight the fire of the Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners. Soon we were partnered with Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners from Stevens Point to determine how we could continue our efforts in supporting this partnership. Amy Wiza, president of WI/Nicaragua Partners in Stevens Point was a guest speaker at our branch meeting. The Fort Atkinson group met monthly at Café Carpe, enjoying a meal, a fun raffle, and a casual meeting. Our local Partners group sold fair trade coffee and held an annual garage sale at Barbara Lorman's home as fund raisers. Many of our branch members contributed items and worked the garage sale. Proceeds supported the educational needs of many Puerto Cabezas students, as well as supplies for the Learning Center for their students. Ruth even travelled to Puerto Cabezas to visit the Learning Centers. Puerto Cabezas suffered losses when Hurricane Felix hit in 2007 and Hurricanes Eta and Iota hit in November 2020. Our local group sent funds to rebuild and support as needed.

Over time, the Fort Atkinson group became smaller so that at this time, it is no longer meeting. Wisconsin/Nicaragua Partners is alive and well in Stevens Point, but the Fort Atkinson group is on the verge of dissolving, following a long hiatus.

If there is any interest or desire to continue this partnership with Nicaragua, with the support and guidance of some of our members and Stevens Point, please contact Kathy C.

Member Spotlight

Leslie LaMuro

Leslie retired October 1, 2020, after 22 years as a marketing specialist at Young Auditorium (17 years) and then as Associate Director of Marketing and Public Events for the College of Arts and Communications (5 years). Leslie and her husband Bob live in Fort Atkinson near the Middle School and raised two sons Nick and Brent who were educated in the Fort Atkinson schools.

Leslie graduated from UW-Whitewater in 1982 with a BA in Theatre and a minor in dance. After getting married in 1985 she and Bob lived in Pittsburgh, Pa for eight years and both boys were born there. During that time in Pittsburgh, she did lots of theatre, some film and voice over work. They moved back to Fort Atkinson to be closer to their families. Leslie has always loved the arts in every form, theatre, dance, fine arts, poetry, and music.

She was first asked to join AAUW by Joan J. The creative, intelligent women in AAUW were an inspiration and a great outlet for a young mother. She enjoys being a part of this organization, helping with the book sale, the Holiday Auction and many other committees over the years. In 2004 she was named the Fort Atkinson Branch Educational Foundation Named Gifts.

She states, "It's been an honor to help raise funds for scholarships for women in the Fort Atkinson area to further pursue their education."

Renee Barr

Renee Barr is a special education teacher in an elementary school, 4K through grade 5. So, for her workdays are never the same or dull! Outside of the school hours, she does things that there is not time for during the school day, like write reports, construct IEP's and document incidents. She knows some sign language and Spanish. Thank you, Renee, for your dedication to the job!

She has two grown daughters, Molly, an interior designer in the Twin Cities and Kate, a photographer and gear manager in Madison, Wisconsin. Her retired husband, Charlie, who used to work as a technology coordinator, and is now working on a project car, and making sure dinner is ready when I get home from work, along with taking care of the household and the two dogs, Penny and Sophie. She likes to read and is part of two book groups. She enjoys sewing, crochet and other crafty projects. Plus, she enjoys writing utensils, especially fountain pens. Renee has done lots of traveling in the United States. She has visited every state except for Alaska which is on her to do list.

Renee is a past president of our AAUW Branch. She continues to serve AAUW by publishing our directory every year.

***Member Spotlight* (Continued)**

Brittany Noe

Brittany was a speaker for the AAUW Fort Atkinson Branch in February 2014 and talked about her experiences and opportunities as a woman in STEM. She graduated for UW-Madison with a BS in Biological Systems Engineering. She joined AAUW in the fall of 2014.

Brittany has been working at Integrated Process Engineers and Constructors (IPEC) in Fort Atkinson since 2012. IPEC specializes in custom equipment and system fabrications for the food and pharmaceutical industry. She started as a Project Engineer and was promoted to Project Manager in March 2021.

Brittany married her husband Jason in July 2019. They recently purchased their first home together in January 2021 and are enjoying the joys and trials that come with new home ownership. It was interesting to discover what plants popped up in their yard this spring and they realized they were the owners of a mature and prolific mulberry tree. Brittany enjoys making various fruit jams so mulberry has been a fun new addition to her repertoire.

Brittany currently serving as our branch secretary. Thank you, Brittany, for your service to our group!

Sunshine Chair

If you know of a member in need of a little sunshine in their life, please let our Sunshine Chair, Carla C. know! She will send get well, congratulations, or sympathy cards on behalf of the Fort AAUW members.



AAUW Scholarship Committee

2021 AAUW Second Chance Scholarships Recipients

The AAUW Second Chance Scholarship was awarded to women who plan to continue their education at a vocational or technical college, after having been out of the mainstream of education for more than one year. Applicants are either a graduate of Fort Atkinson High School, a resident of Fort Atkinson, or be currently employed in Fort Atkinson.



Amy McKenzie

This year, a \$4,500 Second Chance Scholarship was awarded to Amy McKenzie, an employee of Blackhawk Fitness. She is enrolled in the Administrative Professional program at Blackhawk Technical College. A \$3,000 Second Chance Scholarship was awarded to Morgan Hayes, a 2007 graduate of Fort Atkinson High School, who is completing her nursing studies at Blackhawk Technical College. Cheyenne Kopp, a 2013 Fort Atkinson graduate, will receive a \$2,000 scholarship. Cheyenne is completing an associate degree in finance at Madison Area Technical College.

AAUW promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change. Local women returning to college to complete a degree are encouraged to review the AAUW scholarship eligibility requirements at either the Fort Atkinson Community Foundation at www.fortfoundation.org or the Jefferson Community Foundation at www.jeffersoncommunityfoundation.org. The application process for the 2022 scholarship season at both foundations will get underway later this year.

Psst! Do you know a deserving woman starting college or returning to school? Let them know how to apply for an AAUW scholarship or grant.

Spread the word!

TRIVIA: Did you know that the very first fellowship (scholarship/grant) went to Ida Street, a pioneer in the field of American Indian history, in the amount of \$350 back in 1888?

¡ Adelante! Book Group

The book group met on Tuesday, October 12th at the Café Carpe to discuss this quarter's book selection, Between Two Kingdoms, A Memoir of a Life Interrupted by Suleika Jaouad.

This memoir is about a young woman's cancer journey from diagnosis through life cancer free. It is a beautifully written, often hard to read, book that doesn't hold anything back in the telling of life after receiving the news that you have, an often fatal, type of cancer at the young age of only twenty-two. The first half takes you through the brutal treatments, associated debilitating illnesses, loss of independence, and changed relationships.

The second half of the book focuses on the author's nearly as painful task of rejoining the healthy after being given the "all clear" after of treatment and trying to discover who she was and what her new role in the world would be.



The title of the book is a quote Susan Sontag wrote in Illness as Metaphor: "Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick. Although we all prefer to use only the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place".

Eleven members of the book club discussed the many topics brought up in the book and shared personal experiences around the issue of cancer...whether as a patient, or caregiver, or friend. There were tears, laughter, and a great sense of shared humanity.

**Our next meeting will be January 18 at 6:00 at the library where we will be discussing On Juneteenth,
by A. Gordon-Reed.**

Outreach Committee

- Marianne B., Membership/Outreach

We invite you to join us in helping to raise funds for our new Grants for Gals 501(c)3. The Holiday Market is being held at the Fort Atkinson Club on December 4th from 9am to 3pm.

We are selling our newly created fundraising handbags at the Holiday Market in order to build up our fund, so we can begin giving out grants!

We have spent an evening cutting, ironing and matching strap and zippers on 25 new handbags in beautiful, elegant one-of-a-kind fabrics. They join our current stock of 40 bags to give us a lovely and varied display featuring five different bag styles this year.

This is a well-attended market and lots of fun! Please donate a portion of your day, just 2 hours or so, to help sell our Grants for Gals Stickers, our hand-made handbags, greet and meet the public and solicit new members. (Our beautiful handbags are great conversation starters!) We have new signage, new displays, elegant tablecloths with our logo...all we need is your smiling face!

The more the merrier. (That way we can take turns visiting the other wonderful vendors.) Please contact Lisa T.W. if you can help out for an hour or two.

And if you missed the last one, watch this newsletter for information on the opportunity to join us for the next cutting party in January, when we will be preparing our spring and summer bags for sewing. It's so much fun!

(continued on next page)



Here's some additional insight re the work evening:



1.Lisa T. ironing pellon. 2.Mary Kay W. & Vickie W. cutting the handbags. 3. Diane R. construction coordination. 4.Janine F. and Paige Wangerin taking care of strap and zipper.

It looks serious, but it was a lot of fun. 2 hours turned into three. We completed 42 new purses for our sale in December. These will be funding Grants for Gals...the *new* 501C3.

Marianne B. and everybody worked on our linings which this year are fun!

Paige has sewn purses for her Grandma Diane before. She will get school credit for helping us with this fund raiser project. Diane has sewn most of the purses we have sold. Including the ones donated by Ann Johnson in 2011.

Diane's experience and Vickie W. and Mary Kay W.'s sewing, and design abilities really helped us get our pockets and patterns right.

Please sign up to help the outreach committee for the Holiday Market. We will be handing out our new Scholarship and Membership cards at this event while we sell our purses.

Thank you to everybody who emailed because they could not come. We will be getting ready for the summer season in a few months. Keep up with your Newsletter for updates on the next purse put together event.

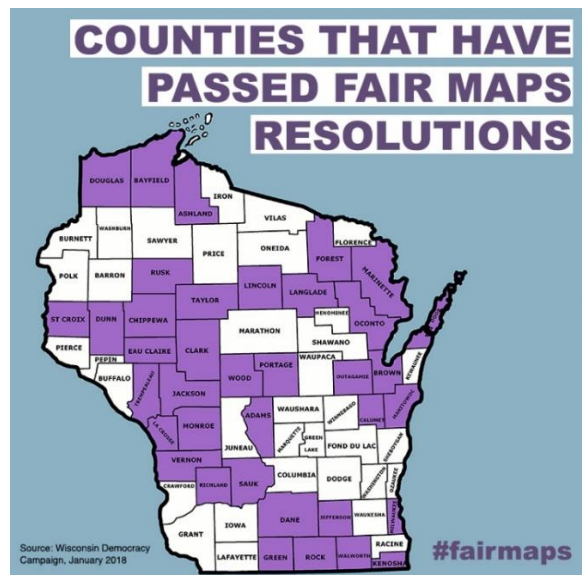
The Gerrymandering Game

By Vicki W.

Every citizen has the right to know that their vote counts and that no politician has manipulated or gerrymandered that vote to their individual political advantage. Gerrymandering is when a political group changes a voting district to hurt another group or work to their advantage. It began in 1812 when Governor Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts signed a bill that redistricted his state to benefit his Democratic-Republican Party.

In Wisconsin, the responsibility for drawing district lines rests with our legislature which happens every 10 years after the US Census. This is a nonpartisan issue that both Democrat and Republican politicians have used to manipulate votes.

Back in 2009, the Democrats in Wisconsin could have solved this problem by passing a bill before them that would have banned gerrymandering and given the state nonpartisan redistricting. Democrats did not want to pass this bill because they thought they would win the election in 2010 and could rig the maps for a Democratic advantage. They didn't win a majority in either the Assembly or the Senate, so the game was passed on to Republicans.



Republican redistricting work was not done at the Capital but at an outside law firm. No one other than Republican legislators were allowed to look at the maps and then they needed to sign an oath of secrecy. No viewing by the press, other members of the legislature or the public

Currently, 51 counties have passed resolutions urging the Legislature to ban gerrymandering. The Marquette Law School poll has shown that 72 percent of Wisconsinites want to ban gerrymandering.

Urge your representatives to vote for your fair representation.

Washington Scene

5-Star Program is Back On

AAUW's Five-Star National Recognition Program rewards branches for efforts to align their efforts with the AAUW strategic plan and national initiatives that foster the organization's mission of advancing gender equity for women and girls. The current program will be running from July of 2021 through June 2022.

The five areas in which the Branches will be able to earn stars are: Advancement, Public Policy and Research, Governance and Sustainability, Programs, Communications and External Relations. If you would like to learn more about the details of the program or the specifics of the individual stars, please



go to: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/5-star-program/>

The Fort Atkinson Branch of AAUW is dedicating time and effort this year to earning four stars. Given the criteria for each of the stars, we believe one of the stars is just out of reach for a small Branch like ours. However, with a lot of work we should be able to reach the four-star level. Vicki W, Maggie W, and Kathy M will be spearheading this effort.

Catch up on Past Webinars

In case you didn't know, AAUW is providing regular webinar content for members on their website. National staff and outside experts share stimulating and thought-provoking programming on the issues important to you. Check out the recordings from past webinars and look out for news of upcoming online events! Find them at:
<https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/webinars/>