



## March Meeting

### **Hoard Museum Director Merrilee Lee to Present “Notable Women of Fort Atkinson” on March 7**

The next AAUW meeting will be on March 7 at the Dwight Foster Public Library. Meeting time is 7:00 p.m. with gathering time at 6:30. The Education Committee will be hosting the meeting. This year we will honor Women’s History Month with a program presented by Merrilee Lee of the Hoard Museum. She will explore the lives of several women who made an impact on Fort Atkinson history.

Fort Atkinson has been home to countless women who have made a tremendous impact on their community. Some women we will learn more about are Almira Foster, Emily Frissell, Caroline Barrie and Emma Brown. Join us to find out who was an early photographer in town, who was an editor of a temperance newspaper and more about the lives of these and other Fort residents. They each have a story of strength, determination and endurance.

Merrilee Lee has been with the Hoard Historical Museum since 2014 and director since 2015. She has a Master’s Degree in History with an emphasis in Historical Administration from Eastern Illinois University. She and her husband Matt live in Fort Atkinson with their seven-year-old daughter Rachel. In her free time, Merrilee enjoys visiting other museums (to borrow good ideas), crafting, reading and being out-of-doors with her family.



Please join us for our meeting either in person or by Zoom. Merrilee is a delightful speaker and the committee is sure you will learn more about the history of notable women from Fort Atkinson.

## Strategic Plan

The strategic plan committee worked over the first couple months of the year to complete a comprehensive strategic plan that would provide our Branch with a document outlining a two year plan for guiding the Branch forward. This document is designed to be a dynamic document, meaning it is to be adjusted and amended as needed to reflect changes to the Branch, community, or focus by National. The Strategic Plan is located on the Branch website under the tab “Governance” and is available to all. In face, we encourage you to take some time and read through the plan and see if you can identify any areas where you can contribute to meeting some of the goals identified. Also, if there are goals or objectives that you think should be considered for addition, please notify one of the officers.

## Mission Statement

Advancing gender equity  
through research, education and  
advocacy

## Vision

Equity for all

## Values

Nonpartisan. Fact-based. Principled. Inclusive and Intersectional

## Inside this issue

President’s Corner.....	2
New of Website.....	2
February Meeting Minutes.....	3
Member Spotlight .....	4,5
Scholarship Update .....	5
5-Star Program .....	6
Tech Savvy/NCCSWL.....	7
Outreach.....	8
Washington Update.....	9
Public Policy.....	10
Membership Matters.....	10
DE&I.....	11
Grants for Gals.....	11

## Coming Up

- March Meeting , March 7th, 6:30 at the library
- April Meeting, April 4th, 6:30 at the library
- State Convention<sup>1</sup> virtual via Zoom, April 22-23

## President's Corner

Hello Members!

I always enter March with a sense of, often unfounded, optimism that Winter is behind us and it will be nothing but tulips and sunshine going forward. But the realist in me knows that it WILL snow at least once more! (But, any snow that does come this month won't hang around very long) Spring is coming!

After several months of hard work by a couple very dedicated people (I'm looking at you Vicki and Maggie) our 5-Star application will so be in the hands of National for review. I feel good about the application and the work that went into it, but unfortunately I am not on the review committee! Fingers crossed everyone!

You will notice in this issue of Branch Beat that everything is coming together for Tech Savvy but we will be counting on all of you for help at the actual event so please read Maggie's article, and see how you can help on April 30th.

It has been proposed to me by a couple of folks that we consider eliminating the January meeting since we have such a terrible attendance and we replace it with a June meeting...maybe a picnic format. What do you all feel about that idea?

Vicki and I are planning on having a viewing party for either the Friday night or Saturday (maybe both) of the State convention...food and beverage included. State Convention is April 22 and 23, so watch this spot for all the details!

I hope you all continue to stay safe and healthy as we slide into year three of the pandemic.

Best regards,

Kathy M.

### New on Website

#### A DE&I Tab

- Community Agreement Sheet
- Key Terms & Concepts

#### Governance Tab

- Strategic Plan
- Branch ByLaws
- Branch Policy Sheet

#### Newsletter Archive

#### Updated News

#### Cleaned up Homepage

[HOME](#)[2021-2022 CALENDAR](#)[BOOK SALE](#)[BRANCH NEWS & EVENTS](#)[CONTACT US](#)[DE&I \(DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION\)](#)[GOVERNANCE](#)[MEMBERSHIP](#)[SCHOLARSHIPS](#)[WHAT WE DO](#)

## Welcome to AAUW Fort Atkinson

Since 1957 our branch has been serving Fort Atkinson and the surrounding area. We are glad you are here. By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.



#### AAUW LINKS

[AAUW Fort Atkinson Facebook](#)[AAUW National](#)[AAUW Wisconsin](#)[Grants for Gals - Our Branch's Newest](#)[Scholarship!](#)[Two-Minute Activist](#)

## Involvement Needed

In meeting with other Branch Presidents and State Committee members it is apparent that Fort Atkinson is not alone in the challenge of declining memberships and lowered involvement within committees and activities.

Our Branch currently has a couple committees that are very low in members, and some have few active members. More participations in these important committees is critically important to meeting AAUW goals.

If you are not currently active on a committee, consider signing up for one. If you have been on the same committee for years, consider changing to a new one; if you have not been a committee chair before, consider stepping forward.

Engagement is needed for growth and success. Our Branch is only as good as our involvement.

## February Meeting Minutes

### AAUW Fort Atkinson Branch – General Meeting Minutes

**Saturday, February 5, 2022 – 9:00a Virtual**

Kathy M called the meeting to order.

**Funds Committee** has provided recommendations for our philanthropic funds allocations and needs a branch vote to approve the recommendations. A total of \$4500 has been raised and \$2000 has already been allocated to the Fort Foundation for local scholarships. The recommendations for the remaining funds are: \$1650 for Greatest Need Fund (National AAUW), \$400 for Grants For Gals, \$285 for Tech Savvy, and \$165 for NCCWSL. If Tech Savvy and NCCWSL do not need/use all of the funds they will be re-allocated to Grants for Gals.

Motion to approve the recommended funds allocations for 2022 by Marianne B, seconded by Bev D. Motion approved.

**NCCWSL** will be virtual and our branch has allocated funds to cover the registration fees (\$165) for one person.

**Tech Savvy:** Maggie W and Vicki W have been spearheading this program and are very excited about the wonderful speakers and workshops that have been set up. Please save the date of April 30<sup>th</sup> and plan to volunteer for Tech Savvy! Your services are needed and would be greatly appreciated.

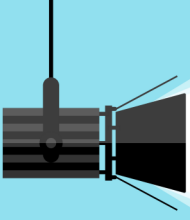
**This Month's Speaker**, Sue Madecky, gave a very informative talk about what she is doing in the community to support women in substance abuse recovery. Sue is doing extremely important work with limited resources and could use additional support in multiple aspects. Please brainstorm ways you or AAUW could help her continue to build and strengthen her community network to keep the Dave Gallup Foundation successful. Her contact information is below:

Sue Madecky  
[davegallupfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:davegallupfoundation@gmail.com)  
(262) 470-8269

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Brittany N, Secretary





# Member Spotlight

## Carla Cheek

Carla grew up in Fort Atkinson and graduated from Fort Atkinson High School in 1967. After one year at UW Oshkosh, marriage, and raising two daughters, she moved back to Fort Atkinson after being gone for 26 years and started to attend UW-Whitewater in the fall of 1992.

Carla found out about an AAUW Scholarship program one Sunday after church while talking to long time AAUW member, Joanne Moon. She was awarded the Jane Shaw Knox Adopt-A-Student in 1994, and became a Student Affiliate Member of our local branch with Joanne Moon as her mentor. After graduating with a BS in Elementary Education (Special Education) in December, 1996, She became a member of The Fort Atkinson Branch in 1997.

The Fort Atkinson Branch of AAUW has always felt like “home” for Carla.. From the first meeting there were many women she knew from her early years in Fort Atkinson, and since then she has met many new women. It still feels like “home”.

She has been involved in many activities, such as the Adelante Book Group, the Used Book Sale, and Tech Savvy, even made some “cheese balls”. She has held the positions of Recording Secretary, VP of Membership, and VP of Programs. Carla was Chair of the Diversity for six years, took a break and now has been chair for another six years. She has enjoyed her time with our branch and the wonderful, brilliant women who have been and are now part of our great branch, and she hopes to enjoy many more years.

**“When One Team Member Succeeds, The Entire Team Succeeds”**  
**Stacy Allison**

## Jill Kessenich

Jill Kessenich grew up in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, near Lake Michigan. She goes back as often as she can, to be rejuvenated by the water and the rocky, sandy landscape of pines and birches. Jill got her BS in Environment, Textiles and Design from UW-Madison in the mid 1980's and spent the first 15 years of her career working for various commercial interiors and residential architectural firms. In the late 1990's she started her own design practice with a partner in Portland, Oregon.

Jill moved back to Wisconsin, where she met and married her web-designer and dobro-playing husband, Steve Tesmer. Jill has worked as an independent designer and teamed up with Steve on multiple projects. She was hired to be on the design team for the Fort Atkinson Club renovation in 2013/14. Jill was then hired in 2018 as the Fort Atkinson Club Director.

Steve and Jill live with their two dogs Bailey and Harpo. They visit Steve's adult son and family in Kansas City when they can. Jill is also one of our past presidents having served our branch in 2008-09.

## Members Needed!

**Do you know a special woman who could benefit from all of the wonderful things AAUW has to offer? Maybe you know a bright college student who could use the tools offered by AAUW as she gets ready to step out into the workplace. The area is full of women who meet the criteria for joining AAUW, but more importantly, have the intelligence, energy, and social awareness to fit into our Branch. We need to find them, recruit them and welcome them into the fold. You know them. Will you ask them to join us?**

# Member Spotlight...cont.

## Frankie Fuller

Frankie has been a member of AAUW for over ten years. Before that, she was an AAUW scholarship recipient. She likes AAUW because we help women in many ways - through providing scholarships, introducing women to new career paths and building professional relationships. Many new friendships are formed on the desire to learn more and see the world in ways in which we might not have otherwise experienced.

Frankie shares with us, "I have been able to pursue my deep interest in government through AAUW by serving as the Public Policy Chair for the past several years. In this capacity, I am a member of the State Public Policy Committee and am working with colleagues at the national level on developing a webinar on student loan debt for women.

She is a Master Gardener, Master Naturalist Volunteer, and president for the past three years for Heart of the City. Last year HOC introduced a No Mow May program and just this last weekend three members from HOC hosted three seminars on No Mow May at the Madison Garden Expo which was well attended. Frankie used to take volunteer vacations and has traveled to Mt. Rainier, the Guadalupe Mountains in Texas, the Boundary Waters, Arkansas State Park, Pensacola, Florida, and Gulfport, Mississippi. Plus, she also had many working vacations along the Ice Age Trail, and served as a campground host at Wildcat Mountain State Park for a season. She loves the warm outdoors! Frankie and her husband love riding their electric bicycles on trails and have plans for a couple of bicycle trips this summer. Frankie is also running for the Jefferson County Board.

## Scholarship Update

### Want to Make a Change in Someone's Life?

You certainly can! All you need do is encourage them to apply for the Second Chance Scholarship offered by our AAUW branch. Applications are now open until April 1, 2022 for both the Jefferson or Fort Atkinson scholarship. Applications are open to women enrolling in a program at a vocational or technical college such as Madison College.

Applicants must meet one of the following criteria:

1. A graduate of Fort Atkinson or Jefferson High School
2. A resident of Fort Atkinson or Jefferson
3. Work in Fort Atkinson or Jefferson

Applications are available online at [www.fortfoundation.org](http://www.fortfoundation.org) or

Jefferson Community Foundation website.

Be sure to let someone know about this opportunity.

— Thea R, Kathy C, Sue D, Vicki W



## Why Work for Five Stars?

At first, I asked myself what was the Five Star program going to do for the Fort Atkinson branch? Fort Atkinson is a GOOD branch that provides lots of scholarship money each year, we have engaging programs each month, and we support National programs and finances. But as I looked closer, I found Five stars was a useful template to help us shape our future, plus receive recognition for our efforts that have been underway for a long time.

The last two years have been a struggle to say the least. Thea Reeves did a marvelous job of keeping us in contact through monthly zoom meetings. Honestly, I don't know what our branch would have done without her at the helm of our organization. The fact remains though that some of our members did not have the technology to meet in this manner. It appears that now we can again start to meet in person. Hooray for being back to personal contact!

But back to the original question – Why work for five stars? The Five Star program is broken down into five areas. Get the connection? We are given guidance for our branch in each of these areas:

1. Communications
2. Programs
3. Advancement
4. Public Policy
5. Governance and Sustainability

As we work on each of these, Five Stars helps us to focus on the AAUW mission of advancing gender equity through research, education, and advocacy. Five Star acts as a guide for our branch activities. During the past couple of months, we have hosted two meetings where we invited other branches, conducted a meeting with a member of our state legislature, updated our branch website, worked on initiating diversity, equity, and inclusion programming, and developed a strategic plan for the next two years.

So, while at first, I was hesitant to consider a Five Star application, it seems that this is really the perfect time to embrace this framework as we look to our future. To paraphrase from the introduction to the original Star Trek series “to boldly go where no woman has gone before!”

— Vicki W



### To Achieve 5 Stars

A lot of work needed to be done to even apply for 5-Star status for the Fort Atkinson Branch. Vicki W, Maggie W, and Kathy M worked hard to get through a long action list just to make applying possible. Here is the short list of items that needed to get done...

- Updated web page
- DE&I added to activities
- Updated/reviewed and published by-laws
- Strategic plan development
- Increased per member donation to National



## Tech Savvy 2022

Maggie W and Vicki W, along with the Janesville Branch, have been working extremely hard getting everything organized for this year's Tech Savvy and things are really coming together now!

Tech Savvy, a workshop designed to encourage girls in grades 6-9 to take classes and consider careers in the STEM fields – Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. (Note, the workshop is targeting girls but boys will be welcomed!)

This year's Tech Savvy will be held in person at University of Wisconsin – Whitewater. Although last year's virtual program was well attended and received, this year's in-person event will be even more exciting!

Here is where we are at right now. We have the presenters. We have the schedule. We have the sponsors. Registration will begin online early in March. **Now we need the members help.** You can sign up at our Branch meeting on March 7<sup>th</sup>, or you can take a peek at the attached sign-up sheet and let us know how you would like to help out.

— Maggie W



### Life Changing Experience

**“I encourage anyone interested in crushing the patriarchy, breaking out of gender norms, strong leadership, equity, intersectionality to go to NNCWSL. It changed my life, and I’m confident it will change yours, too. “**



## NCCWSL Update

NCCWSL (National Conference of College Women Student Leaders) annual conference is coming up soon. Due to Covid the event will once again be held virtually. The date of the conference is May 24-26, 2022. There are scholarships available to cover the registration fees, through the AAUW-Wisconsin Scholarship program and through our local branch.

This is a wonderful opportunity to encourage leadership potential in young women! Please think of your friends, family, and neighbors who have daughters in college or technical school and might benefit from this opportunity and let them know about the conference. The deadline to apply for the scholarships has been extended to March 10, 2022.

Please have anyone interested contact Maggie Wi for the application or further information at:

[Aauw.fortatkinson.wi@gmail.com](mailto:Aauw.fortatkinson.wi@gmail.com) or  
[Maggiewinz76@gmail.com](mailto:Maggiewinz76@gmail.com)

262-370-1159



# Outreach

Thank you to everybody who joined us for our February Zoom Meeting. Our speaker, Sue Madecky, really is a one woman show changing lives one person at a time.

I am glad so many of us had helpful suggestions for her to accomplish her mission with the commitment of many other community organizations and foundations.

We were inspired to take our Outreach meeting and change the format a bit. We have heard from many organizations needing help, financial aid and volunteers in our 7 years as an outreach Committee. Now lets really do something about it.

Going forward we would like our meetings to be work meetings. Visiting with other community organizations to pool and share ideas. Helping out at the community meal share. (Maybe not always Monday night?) Work Meetings, making handbags in support of our new 501(c)(3) Grants for Gals Program. (Maybe you didn't know it, but the new Grants for Gals 501(c)(3) takes our Fort Atkinson Mission to help women and girls county-wide!) Volunteering at a meeting for women in crisis to help with child care.

We need younger members and outreach is the key. Can women come, do a project/job, spend a few hours actively making a difference and then go home to their work and family? Maybe we can do more than enlighten and educate at a meeting. We can work and transform, physically, the lives of women and girls around us.

Look to future *Branch Beats* for updates and information about upcoming opportunities.

— Lisa TW

## Did you know?

We frequently hear about all of the effort National has made in propelling women's rights forward legislatively, but do you know specifically what laws we've had a big hand in getting accomplished?

- Equal Pay Act — Proposed in '45, passed in '63 Title IX — Amendment in '72
- Family and Medical Leave Act — '93
- Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act — '09
- Paycheck Fairness Act — passed by the House in '19, STILL awaiting action by Senate

**We are getting major stuff done, ladies!**



# Washington Update



Have you every wondered how National determines what our Public Policy priorities are going to be for any given period? I did, so I went to the AAUW website to find the answer. Here is how things are decided. Re-printed from AAUW.com:

AAUW's Public Policy Priorities, adopted every two years by every-member vote, establish the federal action issues on which AAUW members across the country focus their advocacy efforts and guide the work of the national staff. States and branches should also use the Public Policy Priorities to inform their advocacy efforts on state and local issues. The strength of the AAUW Public Policy Priorities is that they originate and end with the membership. In the fall of even-numbered years the AAUW Public Policy Committee (APPC) solicits feedback from members and staff to develop proposed Public Policy Priorities based on viability, critical need, strong member support, and potential for distinctive contribution. Once the draft is developed, it is posted online for a comment period and submission of additional proposed revisions. The APPC then finalizes the proposed Public Policy Priorities, and the AAUW Board of Directors reviews, amends as necessary, and approves them before they go to the membership for a vote in the spring of odd-numbered years.

## **This year's proposed edits make the following changes based on member leader feedback.**

- Refinement and added specificity regarding AAUW's commitment to addressing systemic racism
- Refinement of our commitment to equitable access to higher education for all
- Emphasis on the importance of high-quality data collection\*

\*<https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/aauw-public-policy-priorities/>

Since National priorities inform state and local direction and actions, I urge all of you to go to the website listed above and read through the extensive list of priorities and all of the things being advocated for on our behalf. The list is extensive and its important that our Branch is directing our activities in accordance with these objectives and goals. It's so reassuring to know that AAUW is in our corner, and in the corner of our daughters and granddaughters.

— Kathy M

What do: Shirley Chisolm, Nancy Pelosi, Frances Perkins, Janet Reno, Eleanor Roosevelt, Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson, Jane Addams, and Lilly Ledbetter all have in common?

Why they were/are all members of AAUW, Of Course!

# PUBLIC POLICY

Please remember to vote in the April 12 elections for school board, city council, and county board. Local elections are important every year and even more important this year with all of the current issues facing our communities including Covid, infrastructure, teacher shortages, worker shortages, wage disparity, housing shortages...



## MEMBERSHIP *Matters*

Hello fellow AAUW Fort Members,

This is still a rather trying time to be trying to recruit new members to our group, but we have our posters and info cards out and about talking about all our programs and activities. Safely we are getting those in the hands of lots of business's schools, libraries and the Fort and Jefferson Chamber of Commerce.

Happily we have lots of other groups who are working with us on our projects and attending our meetings. Most notably Janesville and Madison Monona. Zoom has been our friend in reaching out and joining our neighboring Branches.

We are excited by the work of all committee's who **keep on keeping on...** Scholarship/ Outreach/Adelante Book Group/Grants for Gals/Programs, and the upbeat and positive leadership of Kathy M and Vicki W.

It has been an interesting period, but as you hear again and again "we will get through this", there will be a new normal.

Chris and I are grateful for everybody who has continued to participate in whatever way they can to keep in touch/reach out/attend and support all our activities.

Thank you so much for being a member of AAUW Fort .

Keep warm and safe,

Marianne B. and Christine Y.

# Grants for Gals

**Front and Center!** Look what eagle eye Vicki W found on the home page of the Fort Community Foundation website! (ed: liberty was taken with the format to make it work for the newsletter)  
Check it out at [www.fortfoundation.org](http://www.fortfoundation.org)



## AAUW's Grants for Gals Scholarship now accepting applications

AAUW-Wisconsin: Fort Atkinson Branch is now accepting applications for the Grants for Gals scholarship (through March 15th). This non-traditional scholarship is offered to provide a grant to local girls and women to help meet an educational, leadership, or professional advancement

## DE&I: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

When engaging with people on the topic of diversity , equity and inclusion, we can move the discussion forward in a positive and safe manner by following some basic rules of engagement. The subject of diversity and inclusion can be emotionally charged and has some potential pitfalls that need to be avoided to have a successful conversation. The following list contains some things to keep in mind when you have the opportunity to have a dialogue on this important topic.

- Speak from the “I” perspective: Avoid speaking for others by using “we,” “us,” or “them.”
- Listen Actively: Listen to understand, not to respond.
- Step up, step back. If you talk too much, step back and listen. If you tend to be quiet, add your voice to the conversation.
- Respect silence: Don’t force yourself to fill a silence.
- Share, even if you don’t have the right words.
- Uphold confidentiality.
- Lean into discomfort: Learning happens on the edge of our comfort zones.



## Member Happenings

We would like to add some “feel good” member content in future issues of the Branch Beat to help everyone keep up with the good things going on with each other. If you have something coming up in your life to celebrate, **please text your info to 920-309-2668**. Here are some examples of what we’re looking for:

- Martha and George Washington are celebrating 36 years of marriage in March
- Abigail Adams and Dorothy Hancock are celebrating Birthdays this month
- Betsy Ross recently won a national flag design contest
- Dolly and James Madison just returned from a 3 week holiday in the old country, be sure to ask them about their trip

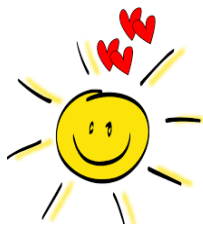
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*“ Have you considered leaving a **Legacy Circle** bequest in your will or trust to affirm your support of girls and women long into the future?”*

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### Sunshine Chair

If you know  
of a member in  
need of a little sun-  
shine 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.

### Do you need a ride to a meeting?

It can sometimes be a struggle at night, especially in the Winter. Don't let a lack of wheels make you miss a meeting! If you do, give **Kathy M** a call at **920-309-2669** or text her and she will organize a ride for you.



To all of you who made generous donation s to the Branch in lieu of donating at our traditional December Holiday gala, **Thank You** from the bottom of our Operating Budget! Many of you have been very generous and it has been appreciated.

For those of you who may have missed the request or somehow overlooked making a donation...it is never too late. Wink wink!