

May 2022

Branch Beat

Mission Statement

Advancing gender equity through research, education and advocacy

Vision Equity for all **Values**

Nonpartisan. Fact-based.

Principled. Inclusive and Intersectional

Dear Member Readers,

I apologize for again having a new look for the Branch Beat. I hate that I had to change the format again, but I purchased a new laptop and my new Apple product does not support the software I was using before. So here I am, once again, having to learn a brand new computer system and a new software program. Lets hope this old dog can learn a couple new tricks!

Kathy M

There won't be a May Speaker...

because at the May meeting we will be celebrating our members with special membership milestones and our retiring board officers. It's always nice to take some time and recognizing our fellow members.

We are also going to roll up our sleeves and form our working committees for the 2021/2022 year.

It's the hope of Vicki and Kathy that members will carefully consider what committees they join this year and that they jump outside their comfort zone and join at least one new committee for the new year.

We would also like to encourage folks to volunteer for a leadership position if you haven't had one before for some time. To ease knowledge transfer, if you step down from a chairwoman position, please stay on that committee for

another year to help the new incoming chair. Let's shake things up with some change!

Here is the list of Committees to consider:

- AAUW Funds
- Diversity
- Grants for Gals
- Membership
- Outreach
- Public Policy
- Scholarship
- Special Events
- Tech Savvy
- Used Book Sale
- Website Committee
- Education/Initiative for Educational Equity

So step out and try a new committee next year, grab a chair position, and work on a new project. You might learn something new, get to know someone new, or just enjoy a new experience.

See you May 2nd, 6:00 at the library, board members please meet at 5:30.

President's Corner

President's Corner

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Happy May Day! While the tradition of leaving May baskets on doorknobs and dancing around the Maypole isn't something we see much around here these days, it's important that traditions be celebrated for the ties to the past that they give us. But they shouldn't be ties that bind and stagnate us.

In my column last month and at last month's meeting I spoke about the need to provide the Branch the opportunity to change and evolve to stay relevant and attractive to younger women today. I know that message resonated with some of you and with others, not so much. That's the thing about change, it can be scary. It moves us out of our comfort zone and into territory that maybe feels strange and awkward. But without it attrition and the lack of new members leaves us with a steadily declining membership. This is the outcome

that that scares me and makes me willing to face down the fear of change.

I heard from a former AAUW state board President and MAL (member at large) who read my column last month and agreed with my assessment of the “ideal new member” and how we need to adjust our messaging to attract women of the 2020s. The issue we face is shared by many Branches across the nation, we are not unique, so I am going to keep on making my case for change. Like I used to tell the many salespeople who reported to me over the years...you can only coast one direction and it isn't up.

Back to May Day...In medieval and modern Europe May first is the celebration of the return of Spring, probably originating in ancient agricultural rituals and celebrated by the Greeks and Romans. However, in 1889, May Day was chosen as the date for International Workers Day by the socialists and communists, and leftist in general, around the world to commemorate the Haymarket affair in Chicago and the struggle for the 8-hour work day.

So whether you are celebrating the beginning of Spring or workers right and your 8-hour work day, I wish you a most Happy May Day!

Kathy M

Monday, April 4, 2022 – 6:30p Library/Virtual

Kathy M called the meeting to order.

NCCWSL: There were no local applicants for the virtual NCCWSL event this year.

Motion by Kathy M to re-allocate the funds for the NCCWSL scholarship (\$165) for use by a female Afghan refugee to attend NCCWSL, seconded by Carla C. Approved by the membership.

Speaker: The speaker was Deb Thiel who is the State Leadership Vice President and member of the Tomah branch. She spoke about volunteering with Afghan refugees at Fort McCoy.

Co-speaker was Samara who is an Afghan refugee. Samara spoke about her experience traveling as a refugee with a group of 148 girls and women who left Afghanistan. She is currently in Milwaukee with a small group of women and is considering going to the University of Arizona in the fall. When asked if there is anything she could use assistance with, she mentioned that her

group of women would love to meet new people and that she in particular could use help learning how to drive.

State Convention:

- There will be a District 1 specific meeting on Friday. Please sign up to attend that meeting if available.
- AAUW Fort Atkinson is hosting a Friday night viewing party at the Fort Atkinson Club. Please RSVP so that we can get a count.

5 Star Application: After some technical difficulty with Nationals' website, our 5-Star application has been submitted! We already received approval of 2 stars for Public Policy and Governance & Sustainability.

June Picnic: Save the date of Thursday June 2nd as we will be hosting a fun, social Potluck Picnic. Marianne B is credited with coming up with the idea for a summer picnic at the poorly attended January meeting.

Book Sale: Kathy C would like sorters to be more vigilant about throwing out damaged/ outdated books during sorting this year. Members of the community have

expressed dismay at the number of books that are thrown out after the book sale and the concern is that it may dissuade people from donating. It is preferred to weed out more of the low-quality books prior to the sale.

Committee Chairs: Kathy M would like to encouraging members to consider shaking things up by joining a new committee or taking on a new leadership role.

Committee's will be discussed at the May meeting. Additional suggestions by members include:

- Review the committees and consider combining committees and/or creating new committees. Review committee names to verify they are representative of the committee's purpose/mission.
- Should there be a committee leader term limit to encourage turn-over?

Officer Nominations:

- President Elect (1 yr Vice President, 1 yr President) is needed
- Bev has volunteered to serve another term as Treasurer

Meeting Time: This meeting was held 30 minutes earlier than the typical meeting time due to the library closing at 8p. The May meeting will also be held at this earlier time.

Motion to adjourn by Kathy C, second by Brittany N.

Submitted by Brittany N, Secretary

May 2022 Treasurer's Report

May 2, 2022

General note: Our Premier Bank accounts have been converted from a 'personal' account to a 'business' account per their recommendation. We will be able to have greater access for multiple officers.

**Last statement: April
13, 2022 Checking
Account**

\$7489.53 Saving
Account \$2,020.32

Expenses since April 1, 2022

\$105 to Fort Atkinson Club for convention viewing. Event cancelled.

Re-applied to 1 year membership at Fort Club, with 2 room rentals included

Not cleared yet:

\$1650.00 donation to AAUW Greatest Needs Fund

Planned Expenditure (Budgeted):

AHT Liability Insurance \$346.80

Deposits since April 1, 2022 None

Planned Philanthropic Disbursements (approved in 20-21 fiscal year):

FAAAUW Grants for Gals Fund \$1500

Reserved funds in Checking:

Grants for Gals 2021-22 fundraising \$1214.94

Backpacks (rollover from 2021) \$153.56

21-22 Philanthropic Funds Reserved:

Grants for Gals 2022 Philanthropy \$400.00

Tech Savvy \$285.00

NCCWSL \$165.00

Pat Hunn

Pat Hunn grew up on a dairy farm and attended a country school just outside of Fort Atkinson. She continues to use the strength and muscles she developed on the farm for our AAUW Book Sale! All of us are amazed with the size and number of boxes that she can lift!

Pat graduated from Fort Atkinson High School and received her bachelor and master's degrees from UW-Whitewater. She taught 4th grade in Edgerton and Janesville, then stayed home to raise her two sons. When they were both in school, she started teaching 3rd grade at Rockwell Elementary School. She has wonderful memories of students and staff from her 27 years there.

**“Being a member is about knowing that you’re not on your own,
and that you share experiences with other people.”**

Janine Ackerman Fixmer

Janine grew up in Milwaukee and attended the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater majoring in Sociology. She was an active member of the Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority, where she headed philanthropic service opportunities in Walworth County. Upon completion of her undergraduate studies, Janine began her career in marketing at Lytle and Associates, working with radio stations throughout North America. She began her insurance career in Denver, Colorado and remained with the same company for the next sixteen years. Janine was promoted to Marketing management and led a marketing team serving the western United States. She attained the coveted CIC accreditation in the insurance industry. In June, 2005, Janine was awarded the Insurance Woman of The Year for the Pacific Northwest, on the heels of giving birth to her first child. In 2007, Janine gave birth to her second child and had her company transfer her to Wisconsin to be closer to her family. In 2014, Janine left her corporate job with Sentry Insurance to embark on a mission to start, and grow Agency Insurance, LLC. Throughout several iterations of the small business, Janine has remained steadfast in her pursuit of successfully providing care and support for her growing client base. She is currently based in Lake Mills, Wisconsin.

Janine along with her agency are strong supporters of the local community. Janine is a member of the Lake Mills Rotary Club, AAUW, booster to the Blackhawk Athletics and serves on the board for Friends of the Library and Friends of Haumerson's Pond.

Janine relishes and believes in the power of AAUW as one of the pillars in communities in which women gather, celebrate, and build upon their achievements. She is grateful to know and interact with the wonderful women of the Fort Atkinson branch. She is very passionate about the Grants for Gals project which provides rich opportunities for diverse women to experience.

New! [June Picnic and Membership Recruitment Event!](#)

The Branch will be having a June meeting this year, in part to make up for the lack of a December meeting, but mostly to “try it on for size” as an alternative to the poorly attended

January Fireside Chat. We will be meeting at the park shelter behind the Aquatic Center on
Thursday June 2nd at 5:30.

On the menu at the picnic will be pulled pork sandwiches, a vegetarian option, sides, and deserts. Members are encouraged to bring a dish to share. Paper plates and eating utensils will be provided. Water and ice tea will be available but please feel free to bring your beverage of choice.

This picnic will also serve as our first recruitment activity of 2022-2023 year. It is timed to take advantage of the special program sponsored by National the **“Shape the Future” membership campaign** that branches can use to recruit and retain members. With this campaign, branches can offer **50% off** national dues when prospective members join AAUW at any event or meeting. Branch members also earn one free national membership for every two new members they recruit.

Each member is encouraged to bring guests to the picnic to learn more about the organization and meet the membership. We would also like to see past members invited to come visit their old friends!

Stay tuned for further details!

Tech Savvy 2022

It's a Wrap!

After months of planning and organizing and two years of delays, Tech Savvy 2022 has finally happened. And it was a hit! Nearly a hundred students and 50 parents descended on UW- Whitewater Saturday April 20 for a day of exposure to some very fascinating presentations in the area of STEM and a keynote highlighting the intersectionality of the arts with science... STEAM!

Kids, primarily girls but there were a number of boys in attendance, got hands on experience in a variety of areas. They designed and build their own phone stands, they scrubbed up and performed suturing on bananas, worked with plasma, wore their genes, learned from glowing animals, and much more. The buzz around the lunch room was that a lot of fun was had by all.

Parents had their own seminar track to attend. They joined their kids for their first session, then they went to sessions on college admissions and financial aide and another on alternative post-high school education options to consider. Our final event was a panel discussion talking with three women about how they got into STEM, what was going to school for a STEM program like (as a woman), and what was their job like day to day. This panel featured our own Brittany Noe!

The attendees were fed breakfast, lunch and a snack, given a t-shirt and a swag bag, and hopefully given a lot of ideas for where their careers can go in the future.

Projects this big don't happen on their own, they require a lot of effort and leadership. The Fort Atkinson duo of Maggie Winz and Vicki Wright deserve a huge thank you for the work,

they along with their Janesville Branch counterparts, put into the successful Tech Savvy 2022. The program couldn't have run without all of our volunteer presenters, who were all fabulous! And last but not least, the other member volunteers deserve a shout out for their help directing girls to their rooms, monitoring rooms and halls, checking in the attendees, handing out t-shirts, cleaning up, setting up, etc: Carolyn N, Bev D, Kathy C, Christine Y, Laurel D, Lisa T-W, Marie N, Kathy R, and Kathy M. And lets not forget to thank Richard Winz for all his help too!

Are You Guilty of Microaggressions?

According to Dr. Derald Wing Sue, a microaggression is a "brief and commonplace daily verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults that potentially have a harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group".

Microaggressions aren't usually intended to hurt the victim because they are different than overt racism, homophobia or other bias, but the underlying meaning often reveals the bias. It's the "everyday" part of the definition that is important. One microaggression might be passed off, but the accumulated microaggressions can have a painful consequences...it impacts the physical and mental health of the recipient.

Microaggressions get caused when your brain gets "stuck" on noticing a person's differences, and words come out of your mouth, maybe you don't even realize how they come across. You can learn how to retrain your brain and prevent yourself from committing microaggressions. You need to check your assumptions, show empathy and try not to get defensive if someone calls you out on saying something "offensive". Take that as an opportunity to learn and do better. We all need to do better.

Here's some examples that marginalized groups face on a day to basis:

- **"You're so lucky to be black — it's so easy to get into college!"**
- **"You can't be a woman if you can't reproduce"**
- **To an Asian American..."where are you really from". "You must be great at math"**
- **"You are the whitest looking black person I've ever met!"**
- **"You are a credit to your race."**
- A white person clutching their purse when a black or latino man walks by.
- **"There is only one race, the human race"**
- A store owner following a person of color around a store.
- **"Have you ever had real sex" to a gay or lesbian**
- **"Oh I wouldn't think you would live here"**

Washington Update

State of Women in 2022

Despite nearly 10 million more women than men voting in 2020 for legislators to guide our country, both at the state and Federal levels, women continue to bear the brunt of the Covid pandemic crisis through job losses. Critical legislation continues to stall in the Senate and state across the country are bringing forward constant threats to the reproductive rights of women and threatening our rights to make decisions regarding our own bodies. But we can change our the future outcome.

By joining voices, staying focused, and keeping our message on point we can drive positive changes. A letter was sent to President Biden and Congress in February by AAUW and many other organizations jointly to show solidarity around the following five points and asking that they be included in upcoming legislation.

- **Pass the Build Back Better Agenda:** Congress must extend the child care tax credit and guarantee 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave. We need to invest in affordable child care, universal pre-k for all families, expanded home and community-based services, better wages for care workers, and maternal health care. Additionally, we need a long-promised path to citizenship for immigrants.
- **Protect abortion rights and access:** Pass legislation, including the Women's Health Protection Act, to protect and expand access to abortion care regardless of where a person lives, how much money they make, or their immigration status.*
- **Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act:** This law is essential to protecting and supporting survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and expanding prevention efforts.
- **Protect voting rights:** Voting rights are a cornerstone of our democracy and a free vote protects all other rights. Our lawmakers must protect every American from the relentless attacks on our right to vote, especially for Black, Brown, Asian American and Pacific Islander, young voters, and voters with disabilities.
- **Criminal legal reform:** To advance racial and gender equity and justice, we need to reimagine public safety and crisis response through investments in non-carceral, non punitive public health solutions to community, family, and school safety. We must end mass incarceration/mass

criminalization, and root out gender, racial, and disability bias from every aspect of the criminal legal system.

“Women don’t live our lives in silos – we need all of these policies to build a country where women and families can thrive. The President has laid out an agenda to meet the moment with us. It’s up to Congress to deliver. “ Letter, “State of Women”, February 28, 2022, aauw.org

Kathy M

It’s Time to Organize for This Year’s Sale!

Since 1979 Fort Atkinson AAUW has held an annual used book sale. That is, every year except 2020 when it was canceled due to Covid-19. As many know, the book sale takes many hands for not so light work! In spite of the work, our branch has earned over \$131,000.00 since the book sale was initiated. In addition to funds earned, the book sale is a great opportunity to work together, have fun while we work, provide reading material for the community, recognition in the community, provide a service for recycling books and more...

This year’s sale is planned Friday and Saturday September 16 and 17 the Fort Atkinson Municipal Building. Set up is Thursday, Sept. 15. We will begin collecting and sorting in June. Exact date and hours will be announced soon.

Organization for the sale is done by a “book board”, dividing the **leadership** tasks among our membership. We are seeking leaders for these committees. **Those who have done these jobs for many years are welcome to continue in their role.**

There will be a meeting of the used book sale board on Tuesday, May 3 at the library in the Rotary room from 6-8pm. All are invited to attend!

The sign up sheet has been circulated at the last branch meetings, with the following jobs still available:

The **committee leads** that are needed are:

- ♦ Box Collection
- ♦ Posters
- ♦ Publicity
- ♦ Sorting
- ♦ Children’s books
- ♦ Specially Priced books
- ♦ Book Transportation

- ✦ Thursday Set Up
- ✦ Friday Sale Workers
- ✦ Saturday Sale Workers
- ✦ Saturday Clean up

For a description of the lead position contact Kathy Cheek at 920-723-4328 or email at kcheek2cheek@gmail.com

Five, four, three

and two to go!

Five stars is a useful template to help us shape our future, plus receive recognition for our efforts that have been underway for a long time. The Five Star program is broken down into five areas. 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 worked on each of these, Five Stars helped us to focus on the AAUW mission of advancing gender equity through research, education, and advocacy. Five Star was a guide for our branch activities.

So how have we done this year? While we are still awaiting some results, we can report that we have received three stars!

***1. Communications** – Kathy M. Maggie W. and Vicki W. along with Renee B. worked on updating the website and Facebook communications. The newsletter is also part of our update in communications. If you have not checked out the website, it contains everything you need to know about our branch. It is a must read! If you miss an email with the newsletter or want to look back at a previous issue, you will find it there. Need information about scholarships for someone, you will find it there. If you need information about Tech Savvy, you will find it there!

***2. Public Policy** – To meet the requirements for public policy, we needed to appoint someone as our state public policy chair. We were way ahead of that with Frankie F. as our public policy extraordinaire who was already in communication with those at the state level. Kathy M. arranged for Don Vrunick, State Assembly Person, to be the speaker at our January meeting. Check that one off on the requirements! Sorry, if you missed him as a speaker, he was so interesting and informative. Finally, at the October meeting Frankie gave us the chance to sign up for the Action Network. Check, check, check it off!

***3. Governance and Sustainability** - Now, this one was a lot of work! A strategic plan that aligned with AAUW National needed to be developed. Our president worked on the basic framework and then all of you received a copy of this plan via email. You were asked to provide input into our direction for the next two years. Kathy M. and Vicki W. went back into the bylaws and were able to highlight a succession plan for officers and committee members. We also needed to appoint a diversity chair, but again we were ahead of the game.

So, what still needs to be approved? We are waiting to hear about **Programs** and **Advancement**. Both have been submitted to Nationals, so keep your fingers crossed that we are successful! So, while at first, was hesitant to consider a Five Star application, it seems that this was really the perfect time to embrace this framework as we look to our future. To paraphrase from poetry by Robert 12 miles to go

we sleep!”

Vicki W.

Public Policy

Heart of the City (HOC) is for the second year promoting a “No Mow May” program to help increase the number and diversity of pollinators and bees.

Interested residents can sign up on the HOC website at

<https://heartofthecity.us/no-mow-may-initiative/>. Free yard

signs to explain and promote the initiative are available with sign-up.

If you feel compelled to mow your lawn in May, even letting it grow taller to about 4" during May is helpful. The most significant thing you can do, however, is to not use

pesticides as part of your lawn care protocol. Pesticides are equally harmful to children, human beings and pets as they are to the creatures that provide us with nearly every morsel of food that we eat.

Planting more native species also helps to increase the diversity of pollinators and you can receive some free native prairie plant seeds when you sign up for No Mow May. We will have native plugs later in the month of May and while there is no specific charge, we welcome donations if you are in a

position to make a donation. you have any specific questions or would like more information, click on the link above. use the link above, or you can call Frankie at 608.445.0809.

Who sculpted the full scale marble statue of Lincoln which is in the Capitol Rotunda, becoming the first female and youngest artist to receive a commission from the government for a statue?

Vinnie Ream (1847 – 1914) Check her out!

<https://www.aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/art/vinnie-ream>

Adelante Book Club

of The Code

Breaker by Walter Isaacson on April 27. Eight women met at the Fort Atkinson library for this deep and informative discussion about the science, legal and ethical issues surrounding gene editing. Our next read will be The Daughters of Erietown, by Connie Schultz.

The Adalelante Book Club would like to offer Terre Golembiewski a huge thank you for her decade of leadership of the Club. Her thorough preparedness and timely reminders kept the Club running smoothly through the years. Kathy Marr has agreed to take over as Book Club organizer.

Did You Know?

It wasn't only Hollywood types that Sen. Joseph McCarthy (R-WI) targeted with his false accusations of Communism and UnAmerican activities. In the early 1950s, McCarthy also accused former AAUW international relations associate Esther Brunauer of being "instrumental in committing the organization to the support of various (Communist) front enterprises." AAUW general director Kathryn McHale and the AAUW Board of Directors staunchly defended Brunauer.

Sunshine Chair!

If you know someone who is 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 Atkinson Branch.

Do you need a ride to a meeting?

Type to enter text

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 need a ride, give **Kathy M a call at 920-309-2669** or text her and she will organize a ride for you.

Still collecting birthdays and anniversary dates of members so we can celebrate you in the Branch Beat. Just email or text them to Kathy M.