



# Branch Beat

## Mission Statement

Advancing gender equity through research, education and advocacy

## Vision

Equity for all

## Values

Nonpartisan. Fact-based.  
Principled. Inclusive and Intersectional



## April 2025 Meeting

The April Meeting will be co-hosted by the Funds Committee and the Tech Savvy Committee on Monday April 7th at 6:30 at the Dwight Foster Public Library in the Community Room.

The **Funds Committee** will give us a walk around the national website, to show us where our Greatest Needs donation goes, and highlight who's been receiving education grants.

The **Tech Savvy Committee** will provide a recap of how the even went, attendance and any feedback received. Vicki will share the short PowerPoint that she used at the Fort middle school to let teachers know about the event.

*The May meeting will be May 5th at the Dwight Foster Public Library, in the Community Room at 6:30.*



## *President's Corner*



By Barbara Rohland

I had an interesting discussion with some members this month about the educational mission of the AAUW. The “U” in our title suggests our members value higher education and have experienced the benefits of an advanced educational degree. But the encouragement by the national organization to extend membership to women without a college degree (not passed by a general membership vote) suggests that we should prioritize a larger goal of equity for women regardless of educational achievement more than a narrower mission of supporting women to obtain a college degree or succeed in fields that require a higher degree (such as STEM careers).

Our outreach mission has supported helping those “in the shadows of life”, those less fortunate than we are, perhaps, in part, because of the advantages we have had because of our education.

Isn't it reasonable to extend our educational (and outreach) mission to support the members of our group - ‘in reach’ as well as outreach? Lifelong learning is the new continuing education. Can't enrichment of our own members be a part of our mission? Instead of (or in addition to) extending the reach of AAUW to include more groups of people can't the AAUW extend their reach to include the enrichment and growth of members already in the organization?

# President's Corner (cont)

The speaker/topic suggested by a member of the state organization was about bereavement, specifically women grieving the loss of a partner, presented by Kathleen Paris, Ph.D., a long-time consultant to UW-Madison and area organizations and businesses who recently authored a book on her experience of widowhood. In an interactive presentation to the Madison/Monona group, she shared strategies that helped her navigate the grief journey as well as suggestions for how to support friends and family who are grieving. She wrote a book called *Gentle Comforts: For Women Grieving the Loss of a Beloved Life Companion*.

I'm not specifically suggesting that we should make room in our schedule for this speaker or this topic, although I would support doing so if there was member interest. My proposal is to broaden the scope of what we consider the educational mission of the AAUW to include. For me, higher education-the 'U' in AAUW- lead to career, financial security, and was my path to self-sufficiency. Traditionally people think that self-sufficiency means financial planning. I think that addressing issues of psychological self-sufficiency at all stages of life is equally important. Education for ourselves as we enter the stages of retirement or living alone (either through divorce, death of a spouse, or the gradual loss of a partner through cognitive and physical decline) is an aspect of growth that is often experienced but not adequately supported.

Perhaps subjects that are more personal or emotional could be addressed in a more informal venue and a smaller group - such as in bringing back a "post-holiday" January meeting at a meeting room at a coffee house, restaurant, or a member's home. I think that it is important to realize that education with a "U" can offer us the advantage of financial security, social networking, and capacity to identify and share resources that can help women navigate the challenges we face later in our life cycle, but the advantages or pursuit of higher education don't end with our retirement party or expiration of professional licensure.



**Hubert Humphrey:** *"the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped"*



**March 31, 2025**

**Account activity as of 03/31/25 on-line view of accounts: \$12,745.04**

Checking Account \$10,722.84

Saving Account \$ 2,022.20

**Expenses since 02.26.2025 (non- membership related/ by check #): \$56.88**

Reimbursement for State Convention gift basket (Barb R.): #3926 \$56.88

**Deposits since 02.26.2025 (non-membership or book sale related): \$21.57**

**Donation for Outreach Committee (Homeless Coalition): \$0.57**

(remainder after gift cards purchased)

**Happy Bucks** from February meeting: \$21.00

**Book Sale Deposits: \$0.00**

**Membership deposited: \$0.00**

**2024-2025 Philanthropic Funds Reserved: \$6,250.00**

- Scholarships (Fort Community Foundation): \$5,000.00  
sent to Knox Scholarship Fund
- Tech Savvy: \$250.00
- NCCWSL: \$0
- Grants for Gals Donations: \$1,000.00  
sent to Fort Community Foundation



**Fort Atkinson Branch**

## **February General Meeting**

**March 3, 2025**

**The Community Room/Dwight  
Foster Public Library**

### **Agenda**

6:30-6:50 Enjoy Snacks and Social Time

6:50 Welcome visitors

6:55 Happy Bucks

7:00 Program:

Host: Education Committee (M. Winz, chair)

Topic: Tuesday Club: Women's Quest for Learning since 1881

Speaker: B. Geyer

### **7:30 Business Meeting**

1. Treasures Report – A. Thompson, treasurer - Printed in the March Branch Beat newsletter. Motion to approve F. Fuller, seconded M. Dunnam. Approved.

2. Secretary's report (minutes of Feb. 3 meeting) – B. Dahl, secretary - Printed in the March Branch Beat newsletter. Motion to approve M. Lee, seconded B. Rohland. Approved

3. Philanthropic Fund Distribution discussion: Postponed to April meeting, will include disbursement of proceeds from Pi Day sale.

Note: approx.. \$2000 plus earnings from Pi(e) sale will be available for distribution for Philanthropic contribution

4. Pi Day (3/14/2025) - Pi day (partnership with Heart of the City and Friends of the Library) on March 14, Noted that emails are sent as confirmation of signup.

5. Upcoming vote (in April) from AAUW national concerning Dues change, change in (national) bylaws, and Public Policy Priorities. Look for email with link.

6. Officer slate for 2025-26 must include the following. Call B. Rohland to self-nominate, note that two people may share an office.

- President
- President elect
- Secretary
- Membership VP



## **Fort Atkinson Branch**

### **February General Meeting**

**March 3, 2025**

**The Community Room/Dwight  
Foster Public Library**

7. State Convention 2025: April 25-26 in LaCrosse WI
  - Basket for Silent Auction will contain local items
  - Register online at AAUW-Wisconsin website. **REGISTRATION NOW OPEN**
  - All or some of registration fee will be reimbursed, depending on number of attendees from branch
8. State Convention 2026 (Maggie Wintz)
  - Hosted by district 1: Fort Atkinson, Janesville, Beaver Dam, Madison/Monona
  - Planning Committee volunteers needed from each branch (one -2 hr. zoom meeting per month)
9. Public Policy update -Kathleen Townsend
  - State elections: Supreme Court judge, state Superintendent of Public Instruction, voting referendum
10. Outreach (homeless coalition) update- Kathleen Townsend
  - Domestic abuse is referred to New Beginnings.

Question on minor un-homed bused to school. Have not had to put children into hotels which would require busing.

Referrals made to Rock River Clinic.

11. Tech Savvy update- Maggie Winz

Call out to Vicki Wright and granddaughter for press coverage (see article in Branch Beat) – Well Done!

12. Vote! April 1

Non partisan elections of Wisconsin Supreme Court judge, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Jefferson County circuit court.

Also a referendum on elections (requires picture ID to register to vote)

Reviewed Endorsements by Jefferson County Dems and Republicans (informational only)

Next Meeting Date: Monday, April 7. Time: 6:30 PM

Program Host: AAUW Funds Committee and Tech Savvy

Motion to adjourn T. Beckman, seconded R. Barr.



**Fort Atkinson Branch**

**Executive Board Meeting**

**March 3, 2025**

**Dwight Foster Public Library**

**Attendees:**

**Barbara Rohland, Beverly Dahl, Alyssa Thompson, Kathy Marr, Kathy Townsend, Vicky Wright, Renee Barr, Maggie Winz, Mary Kay Weston, Frankie Fuller**

**Agenda**

Last Meeting Follow-up:

**1. Pi Day Sale (March 14, 2025)**

More than 25 members have committed to baking or working

A commitment form goes to organizer Julie for count. Bakers should use non-returnable tins and put AAUW on tin to get us credit.

**2. Tech Savvy - April 5**

Enough volunteers are scheduled. Set to go

**3. Philanthropic Allocation – to be discussed further**

**4. Silent Auction Basket for 2025 Convention.**

Basket of local items is ready to go. \$57 reimbursement will be made to B. Rohland.

**New Business**

**1. Financial Report - Alyssa Thompson, treasurer**

Report is in Branch Beat. \$1000 from P. Jones sent to G2 fund.

FYI, a check with Fort Foundation show that G2 balance is \$36,000, Second Chance is \$337,000, Jane Knox at \$248,000

**2. Funds Distribution (discussion)**

- Scholarships- \$5000 have already been added to funds to be disbursed by FAFS in this year's scholarships
- 5 Star program status



- Greatest needs fund (AAUW National)
  - \$1785 budgeted (estimate \$30/member) for a Star
- 5 Star program status
  - Budgeting for Greatest Needs donations
  - National office reports \$1,055 (12/31/25) including gifts by individual members and from the branch to date this year
  - National FY24 Feb 1 membership count is 53 (needs to be 80% of this for 5 Star program)
  - Increase by 15% over 2023-24 needed for a star (star status criteria) National states 15% increase to FY24 would be \$2231.58
- *5 Star discussion points:*
  - *Why should we pursue 5 star status?*
    - *Support national organization, advocacy*
    - *Give members goals to achieve*
    - *Credibility to national and state orgs*
    - *Continue to support original work to achieve it*
  - Other philanthropic areas to support (from book sale funds)
  - NCCWSL Support (local and/or state)- no longer funded by Nat'l AAUW
  - Outreach (local Projects)
  - Grants for Gals (see \$1000 private member donation above)
  - Grade schools for supplies. Have discussed establishing contacts for each school.

#### Additional fundraising for Local Outreach

Pi day (partnership with Heart of the City and Friends of the Library) 3/14

Personal Care kits (February meeting) – Donations from the meeting were \$159, \$49 was used to finish filling kits, \$110 purchase \$10 gift cards.





**Fort Atkinson Branch**

**Executive Board Meeting**

**March 3, 2025**

**Dwight Foster Public Library**

### 3. 2025 Booksale

- Organizational meeting April 17, 6:30 (Rotary Room)
- Sept. 12-13, Municipal Building (alternate dates Sept. 4-6). Labor Day is Sept.

#### 4. AAUW all member vote via email in April

- Dues change
- Change in (national) bylaws
- Public Policy Priorities

### 5. Officer slate for 2025-26

Open offices:

President, Vice President, Secretary, and Membership VP. Forming a Nominating Committee.

### 6. State Convention 2025: April 25-26 in LaCrosse WI

- Registration now online at AAUW Wisconsin website
- State Convention Trifold (updated Spring 2024)
- Ride sharing?
- Attendance reimbursement?

### 7. State Convention 2026

- Hosted by district 1: Fort Atkinson, Janesville, Beaver Dam, Madison/Monona
- Planning committee volunteers from each branch (1-2 hr zoom meeting per month)

### 8. Election April 1. Encourage membership to vote in state and local elections.

- Provide information (not explicit endorsement) about candidates to local elected positions
- State elections: Supreme Court judge, state superintendent of public instruction and voting referendum

Next meeting: Monday, April 7, 2025

Motion to adjourn at 6:25 by R. Barr. Seconded by B. Dahl. Adjourned.

2025 Tech Savvy is all set to roll! Sponsors, volunteers, presenters, and students are all ready to make this year's program the best yet!

Thank you to everyone who stepped up to volunteer — this could not have been possible without the terrific teamwork the branch (and Janesville!) has demonstrated!

We will see you this Saturday 5th at UW Whitewater!





## It's Time to Organize

# REMINDER!

There will be an **organizational meeting** for the 2024 Book Sale on **April 17 at 6:30 in the Rotary Room of the Fort library**. All project leads and general members are encouraged to attend. We are actively seeking members to step up and fill some holes in our book sale team. This annual event is a huge undertaking and takes help from many members to pull off a successful event.

We will be looking for volunteers for the following tasks: book sorting, poster distribution, sign distribution (day of sale), work at sale, sale cleanup/teardown, marketing, and other tasks yet to be determined. Please let Kathy M. or Kathy C. know if you would be interested in volunteering some of your time to the book sale.



# Help Us Continue to be a Five Star Branch!



Last year we were a four star branch. We did not make the cut because we were not aware of Action Network. In fact, only one branch in Wisconsin was aware of it and thus they were a five star. Help us meet the standard and attract new members who see on our website that we earned all of our stars again! I signed up following the directions step by step. It truly is easy, easy, easy to do and I think the benefits will be tremendous in so many ways.

Take Action, Action Network, and Two-Minute Activist

"You will see all three of these terms on [AAUW.org](http://AAUW.org).

1. Take Action is on the menu bar on the home page.
2. By clicking on Take Action, you will be directed to the following menu selections: Two-Minute Activist, Policy Center, Advocacy ToolKit, and Support AAUW.
3. When you click on Two-Minute Activist, you will see: Join Our Action Network which is where you can sign up to get regular alerts on how and when to engage.

**AAUW provides all the tools you need to call or send messages to your members of Congress, contact your state legislators about pressing issues, and more. When you sign up, you will start receiving emails from Action Network with the link to Two-Minute Activist.**

Many of you may already be signed up for these alerts. They truly take less than two-minutes to complete! If you have not signed up, please consider doing so. It is a great way to easily have your voice heard on current issues pertaining to women."

As a Two-Minute Activist, you will receive urgent e-mail notices when your advocacy is needed most. We'll provide all the tools you need to contact your members of Congress, write letters to the editor in your local newspapers, connect with your state legislators about pressing issues and more. With your help, our Action Network can continue to boost AAUW's influence on Capitol Hill and in statehouses across the nation.

AAUW is non-partisan but we are all about issues related to advancement for women. We need to let our legislatures know who we feel about issues pertaining to us and other women.



# BOOK CLUB

*The book club will be meeting next on Thursday April 10th from 6:00–8:00 in the Niedecker Room at the Dwight Foster Public Library in Fort Atkinson to discuss The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store, by James McBride.*

*Our next selection is The Women by Kristin Hannah. We will be meeting to discuss this book in July, date to be decided.*

*At the July meeting we will also be deciding our next year's book selections so please start considering your recommendations and send them to Kathy M. at any time.*



**AAUW-WI Convention 2025 is just around the corner!**

**AAUW: Bridges to the Future**

**Stoney Creek Hotel, La Crosse/Onalaska,**

**April 25-26**

**Mark your calendars now!**



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A wonderful thank you letter from our February presenter, Sheri Bronstad!

## HCFC - HOMELESS COALITION OF FORT ATKINSON

PO Box 785 • Fort Atkinson, WI 53538 920-397-9307 • [forthomeless.org](http://forthomeless.org)

February 24, 2025

Dear Mary Kay Weston,

Thank you for reaching out to the Homeless Coalition of Fort Atkinson (HCFA) and giving us an opportunity to share with the Fort Atkinson branch of the American Association of University Women about our mission and what we have accomplished. It was a pleasure speaking to your group and sharing a PowerPoint presentation. Your group asked many great questions, making it clear that they wanted to understand and care about the homeless in our community.

What a beautiful response from the women who brought toiletries and worked together in such an organized fashion to put together both women's and men's toiletry bags to donate to us. The very next week, a man needed toiletries and made a special request for Old Spice products. One of the bags that you donated had several Old Spice products in it. This brought a smile to this man's face.

Thank you so very much for partnering with us to help the homeless by donating toiletry bags as well as a bag of extra products and underwear.

Sincerely,  
Sheri Bronstad  
Executive Director/HCFA



## Pi(E) Day Results Were Sweet!

AAUW Fort Atkinson's fundraising collaboration with Heart of the City and the Dwight Foster Friends of the Library was a celebration of all things Pie!

There were a total of 60 pies donated – 52 sweet and 8 savory. The lot were sold out in short order!

The donation and proceeds were:

	<u>DONATED</u>	<u>PROCEEDS</u>
<b>AAUW</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>\$451.65</b>
<b>HOC</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>\$475.81</b>
<b>FOTL</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>\$115.54</b>

