



# Branch Beat

## Mission Statement

Advancing gender equity through research, education and advocacy

## Vision

Equity for all

## Values

Nonpartisan. Fact-based.  
Principled. Inclusive and  
Intersectional

*"The time is  
always right  
to do what is  
right."  
Martin Luther  
King*

## March Meeting Hosted by Education Committee

### Subject: Tuesday Club

The education committee is hosting Monday night's meeting, which will feature a talk by Bonnie Geyer about Fort Atkinson's Tuesday Club, Wisconsin's oldest active women's study club. Formed in 1881, the group was started by sixteen women who craved an opportunity to read and learn together. The women, who were considered leaders in the literary activities of the community, overcame challenges to start and sustain the club. Among those challenges was the lack of a public library to research topics and check out books. And now, after 143 years, Tuesday Club members continue to meet to enjoy a talk, a tea, and companionship.

Bonnie has B.S. and M.S. degrees from UW Madison. She served as Program Director for the Wisconsin Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, where she started and ran a statewide training program for home visitors who worked to support parents. She then became a senior outreach specialist for UW-Extension on the Madison campus, continuing to run the home visitor training program and developing and running five conferences. Currently, she serves on the board of directors of the Fort Atkinson Community Foundation and the Historical Society.



## President's Corner

By Barbara Rohland



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First of all, AAUW members have much to look forward to. Pi Day bake sale on March 14, Tech Savvy on April 5, State Convention April 25-26. Not to mention sunshine and green grass.

But the last two months have been cold and bleak, in more ways than weather. On a message chain with a group of friends, someone said that if our German immigrants had stayed in Germany they are sure that we (those of us of German descent) would not have been Nazis. It gave me pause (including the fact that I wouldn't exist given that my father met and married my Polish mother in Wisconsin). Rather than basking in the belief that I would have been heroic in the face of adversity, I think that the more important issue is to be aware of the insidious danger of fascism in a world gone crazy - regardless of our ethnic backgrounds or where we live.

We need to be vigilant against becoming individuals or groups that disregard our moral compasses. I suspect many German people in 1930's Germany were twisted into something they did not want to be because of impossible choices they had to make and difficulty discerning truth (e.g., 2+2 is 5 as in George Orwell's 1984).



## *President's Corner (cont)*

I don't think that the human psyche can live in a constant state of fear. Our human nature is to take some action to reduce our level of distress. My first instincts were sheltering at home (a combination of fear and denial), or moving to Canada (too cold, and too far from my family). And there is the option of acceptance, going with the predominant winds of change not knowing where they are taking you (which might get us through the day but doesn't bode well for the generation(s) that follow). James Carville, in a recent NYT editorial, suggested that we "roll over and play dead" (in military terms, take a 'tactical pause') until the new world order collapses in on its own weight (or rather just before it does, so that we can step in and turn it around). And, for now, we have the right of protest. I already flunked the challenge of economic blackout day (February 28) by buying potato chips and paper plates for my great niece's birthday party. And do I tell the hardworking self-employed young man painting my bathroom walls that I can't pay him because I am outraged by corporate greed?

And now the \$5 trillion dollar question is: what do we do? In preparation for WW II, a poster produced by the Government of the United Kingdom advised the country to "keep calm and carry on". Stay involved in things that keep you in the rhythm of day-to-day life (like looking at recipes for the pies you are making for Pi Day.) I am making a special effort this year to be informed about upcoming state and local politics. I also want to learn more about the history leading up to the rise (and fall) of the National Socialist German Worker's Party in Germany between 1920-1945. And, while I am thankful that my German ancestors made the choice to come to America before that (in 1905) I also want to learn more about the experience of those who stayed so that I know what to watch for.

**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!**



**February 26, 2025**

**Account activity as of on-line view of accounts: \$12,723.39**

Checking Account \$10,701.27

Saving Account \$2,022.12

**Expenses since 01.27.2025 (non- membership related – by check #): \$150.00**

Fort Atkinson Chamber of Commerce Membership Renewal: \$150.00 #3924

**Deposits since 01.27.2025 (non-membership or book sale related): \$45.00**

Donation for Outreach Committee (Homeless Coalition): \$25.00

Happy Bucks for October & November: \$20.00

**Book Sale Deposits: \$689.05**

Online (01.01.2024 – 02.26.2025): \$140.00

Online (01.29.2025): \$549.05 (final deposit towards 2024)

**Membership deposited: \$13.00**

National Transfer of Local Dues (December 2024): \$13.00

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

Scholarships (Fort Community Foundation): \$5,000 sent to Knox Scholarship Fund

Tech Savvy: \$250.00

NCCWSL: \$0

Grants for Gals Donations: \$1,000 sent to Fort Community Foundation



## **Fort Atkinson Branch**

### **February General Meeting**

**February 3, 2025**

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

Program Host: Outreach Committee, Mary Kay Weston, chair

Kathleen Townsend delivered a presentation about the history and mission of the Homeless Coalition.

Following the presentation, attendees assembled personal care packages of donated materials to be given to Homeless Coalition clients.

#### **Business Meeting**

Financial Report – A Thompson

Book Sale 2024 total sales - \$9111

Holiday Auction proceeds (designated for Operational expenses) - \$1421

Funds Distribution for Philanthropic causes – discussion and decision deferred to March

Options include: local scholarships (\$5000 already distributed), Grants for Gals, AAUW Greatest Needs (\$1785/\$30 per member budgeted), AAUW (15% over 2024 for Star), community outreach.

Fundraising Opportunity –

Pi Day Pie Sale at Dwight Foster Library, in partnership with Heart of the City and Friends of the Library, on March 14.

Email will be sent to membership to determine interest in donating pies and volunteering during the event.

National AAUW message – review proposed changes concerning dues, bylaws, and public policy priorities (focus on education).

Reminder - there will be new officer elections for Incoming President, Secretary, and Membership VP. Anyone with interest in a position should contact President Barbara Rohland.

Reminder – the 2024 State Convention will be held April 25-26 in LaCrosse WI. We will fill and provide a gift basket of local products for the silent auction.

The 2026 State Convention will be hosted by our district, probably in Madison. Each branch will have 4-5 representatives on the Organizing Committee, with a monthly Zoom meeting. Any interest, contact Maggie Winz.

Public Policy –State and local spring elections will be on April 1, and will include State Supreme Court judge, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and a state constitutional amendment. Educate yourself and vote!

Former Jefferson County Court Commissioner Jennifer Weber briefly addressed the group. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00.

NEXT Meeting: Monday, March 3, at 6:30.

Program Host: Education

Speaker from the Fort Atkinson Tuesday Club: Women's Quest for Learning Since 1881





## **Fort Atkinson Branch**

### **Executive Board Meeting**

**February 3, 2025**

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

Attendees: B. Rohland, B. Dahl, A. Thompson, K. Townsend, R. Barr, M. Winz, M. Lee

#### 1. Finance Report - A. Thompson, Treasurer

Checking balance \$11,104.22, Saving \$2,021.97.

Book Sale Recap - \$9,111.78 in income.

Holiday Auction - \$1,421.40

Donation to Grants for Gals - \$1,000 from P. Jones.

Disbursed to FA Community Foundation for 2025 Scholarships - \$5000, per November meeting vote.

Noted that contribution sent to National AAUW Greatest Needs Fund, approved in 2024, has not yet been acknowledged.

#### 2. Book Sale discussion

Some discussion about listing our Book Sale as a stop if it is the same weekend as the City Rummage Sale in 2025.

#### 3. Funds Distribution Discussion

Philanthropic giving can include: the national AAUW Greatest Needs fund (which are credited for branch 5 Star Status), NCWSSL attendance scholarship, Local Outreach projects, and Grants for Gals.

About \$2000 is available for distribution to the above.

No specific special project has been identified yet for 2024-2025, and any project is expected to be smaller than the Dental Clinic project for 2023-2024 was. Approximately \$350 remains unspent from that 2023-2024 project.

School Supplies is included under the umbrella of Special Projects. We have distributed cash to schools for them to purchase supplies as needed, and we have purchased bulk supplies for them to distribute as needed. Discussion as to mid-year needs, and if we can help with that. Supplies can also include clothing, shoes, and personal products. Discussion as to whether we should have a contact person in an 'Adopt a School' role.

Noted that NCCWSL is now being organized by an outside organization, and communication has not been forthcoming from them. This does not seem to be a good alternative for our funds this year.



## Fort Atkinson Branch

### Executive Board Meeting

February 3, 2025

The Community Room/Dwight  
Foster Public Library

—Continued

Fund Raising – It has been suggested we participate in the Friends of the Library Pi Sale on March 15 to raise additional Philanthropic funds.

- Friends of the Library and Heart of the City (HotC) currently supply pies, and take a proportion of funds raised.
- Prices are: \$14 whole pie, \$3 slice, \$5 mini/tart, and \$20 for specialty
- People would be needed to help at the sale

Someone will check with K. Welsh and B. Camplin of HotC to learn more.

Funds Distribution discussion tabled until next meeting.

Officer Slate – There will be elections this year for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Membership. B. Rohland is willing to hold the position for another year, providing a VP is elected. We will begin to solicit candidates.

The State Convention will be April 25-26. We are committed to providing a Silent Auction Basket. We will look to fill with local goods.

The 2026 Convention will be hosted by our district, probably in Madison. M. Winz is co-chair for that event. Additional people are needed to help organize. Other members will be needed during the event.

Reminders:

- Members should vote concerning AAUW proposals.
- State AAUW is encouraging members to enroll in the 2 Minute Activist / Action Network.

Adjourned at 7.





# Tech Savvy Workshop to introduce girls to STEM careers

— Reprinted from Janesville Gazetteextra

WHITEWATER — A Tech Savvy STEM Workshop designed to inspire and encourage girls in science, technology, engineering, and math fields will take place on Saturday, April 5, from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at UW-Whitewater.

Tech Savvy is a hands-on STEM workshop lead by female professionals in STEM fields. It is designed for girls in grades 6-9, but interested boys may attend. Students will have the opportunity to choose three workshop sessions and learn directly from young professionals in STEM careers.

Workshop topics include: Bath Bomb Chemistry; Build and Program a Robotic Hand; Electrolyte Challenge: Juice versus Sports Drink; Bust Crimes with Technology; Wear Your Genes; Earthquakes, Volcanoes, and Landslides; Surgical Intern for a Day; Solving Weather Mysteries; A Solar Car Building Adventure; and Civil Engineering: Measure the Eiffel Tower with Surveying Tools.

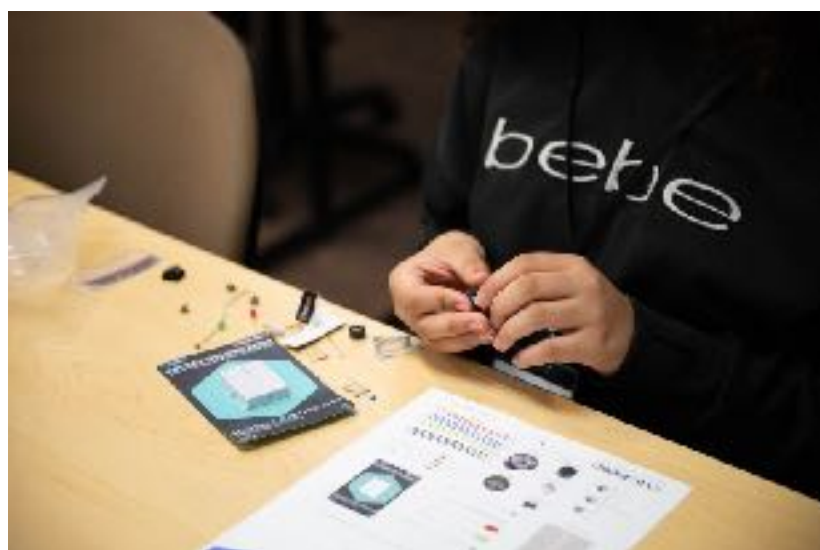
There is a parallel program for parents. Parent topics include: The Potential of Artificial Intelligence; Exploring Sustainability Careers; The Future of IT Careers; Explore Careers in Health Care; and What Are the Differences among Engineering Specialties?



The keynote address, “The Sky’s the Limit: How Passion Helps You Weather Life’s Storms,” will be presented by Amanda Morgan, Meteorologist, WMTV 15 News, Madison. Online registration is required. [www.uww.edu/ce/camps/additional/techsavvy](http://www.uww.edu/ce/camps/additional/techsavvy)

Cost is \$15 per participant which includes lunch, and a t-shirt and drawstring bag for students. Parents are encouraged to attend. Registration closes March 31 or when our limit of 120 student participants is reached.

Tech Savvy is co-hosted by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Janesville and Fort Atkinson. Our sponsors include: Alliant Energy, Fort HealthCare, Ball Corporation, SIM, Spacesaver, and SHINE Technologies.



### **Granddaughter Takes First Step Toward AAUW Membership!**

Adaline Helmke was interviewed on Channel 15 along with her grandmother, Vicki Wright, to highlight the upcoming Tech Savvy on April 5. It was a live interview with Adaline not knowing what she would be asked to share. Adaline has attended three Tech Savvy events over the years. Now being a high school freshman she is considered an old pro when it comes to STEM careers!



## It's Time to Organize

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. know if you would be interested in volunteering some of your time to the book sale.





*The following article was supplied by AAUW National in response to the current attacks on DEI activities across the country, It is a changing landscape and how DEI is referenced and spoken about can have a tremendous impact on diversity progress going forward.*

## The Legal Landscape Around DEI Is Shifting. Your Messaging Should, Too.

by Kenji Yoshino, David Glasgow and Christina Joseph

February 11, 2025 Harvard Business Review

### Summary.

Anti-DEI activists and government officials are combing corporate websites and public statements looking for evidence of illegal diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs. That has led some corporate leaders to stop talking about DEI, but silence risks damaging the trust of your employees and customers. The authors, from NYU School of Law's Meltzer Center for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, identify best practices for communicating about DEI, offer some sample language to avoid legal risk, and share strategies to disseminate these best practices throughout your organization.

**Find entire article at the following link:**

<https://hbr.org/2025/02/the-legal-landscape-around-dei-is-shifting-your-messaging-should-too>



# DIVERSITY

## D.E.I. INCLUDES:

- ◆ ramps and sidewalk curb cuts
- ◆ subtitles & captions (TV & phone)
- ◆ family restrooms
- ◆ changing tables in men's restrooms
- ◆ breast feeding/pumping stations & accommodations
- ◆ floating paid holidays
- ◆ pay equity & transparency
- ◆ parental leave (time & pay)
- ◆ coming back to a job after birthing a child
- ◆ not having to just accept workplace harassment
- ◆ work accommodations for a variety of disabilities
- ◆ flexible work arrangements
- ◆ size inclusive chairs and beds in medical facilities
- ◆ belt extenders on planes



# Convention Is Coming Soon!

<https://youtu.be/mtMrLM8Exes>

AAUW-WI Convention 2025 is just around the corner! *Forward AAUW: Bridges to the Future* will be held at the Stoney Creek Hotel, La Crosse/Onalaska, April 25-26. **EVERYONE IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THE STATE CONVENTION – NOT JUST OFFICERS.** Please join us! It's an excellent way to meet members from throughout the state and hear about current issues in women's rights, public policy, and other important subjects. For more information, to register, and to reserve a hotel room, please go to <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/convention/>.

A third keynote speaker has recently been announced: Meghan Kissell, Senior Director of Policy and Member Advocacy at AAUW National. Meghan's presentation is titled, "National AAUW Public Policy." Meghan has more than 20 years of nonprofit policy and issue developing and implementing targeted social impact strategies designed to engage key stakeholders and policy makers to advocate for positive policy outcomes. Prior to joining AAUW, Meghan led efforts to expand LGBTQ equality in the Deep South with the Human Rights Campaign. She also worked for the Conservation Lands Foundation, organizing local and national campaigns resulting in the successful protection of more than five million acres of public land. Immediately following Meghan's presentation Barbara Peterson, AAUW-WI Public Policy Co-Chair, will discuss public policy at the state level.

For the first time this year, AAUW Wisconsin is inviting non-members to attend the convention. So please bring along a daughter, granddaughter, sister, friend, or colleague. The cost of attendance is the same as for members and non-members can register in the same way that members do at <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/convention/>. Convention registration must be done online. Payment can be made on the website, with no service fee, using a credit or debit card, Apply Pay, or Google Pay. Alternatively, registrants may pay by sending a check via USPS. The deadline to register without a late charge is March 24.



# CONVENTION 2025 REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!!!

Welcome to the city of La Crosse on the mighty Mississippi. You can now register for Convention 2025 on April 25-26, and we encourage your friends who are not AAUW members to join us.

Just click this link to the AAUW WI website <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net> and then click "State Convention" on the horizontal menu at top of page and you will find:

## Convention Registration:

- **Everyone will need to register online.**
- Registration fees are \$107 for only Friday, \$85 for only Saturday, or \$135 for both. Your meals/beverages/snacks are included in your registration fees.
- After you register, you can pay online or by check. **No service fees are charged** for online payments.
- **Late registration charge of \$10 after Monday, March 24.**

## Hotel Registration:

- We will meet at Stoney Creek Hotel in Onalaska/La Crosse. We have a special rate, and you can book your room online at our website or use the phone number that is provided.
- **2025 Hotel rooms \$104 + 13% tax = \$118.04**
- Hotel registration includes self-serve breakfast.
- **Last Day to Book at special rate: Monday, March 24, 2024.**
- Check around with your friends and find someone with whom to share a room.

As you scroll through our convention page on the AAUW WI website, you can also find out about our optional Friday morning activities, silent auction, and the entire schedule of convention activities/speakers.

Register today to visit the city of the Mississippi River, to hear ideas from speakers, and to visit with old friends and meet new ones.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In case you missed the article in the Jefferson County Daily Union following last month's Community Outreach project, it is reprinted here.

## STANDING TOGETHER

### Fort organizations team on community needs

By HANNAH BROCK, JCDU

FORT ATKINSON – The Fort Atkinson branch of the American Association of University Women has selected the Homeless Coalition of Fort Atkinson as its primary outreach focus for 2025.

Mary Kay Weston, a member of the association, said that every year “we choose another community need” to “adopt.”

Each year, the association's outreach committee identifies a local organization to support, balancing the scope of the project with available resources. In previous years, the committee undertook significant endeavors, such as refurbishing the reception area of the Rock River Community Clinic's dental office in Fort Atkinson in 2024.

The Homeless Coalition of Fort Atkinson was started in 2019, after the death of a homeless person, Keith Lueloff, in one of the city's parks.

After his death, a group of concerned citizens from churches, organizations, and businesses in the city came together and formed the coalition, to assist those in need of shelter and support.

“Look how cold it's been, what would they do, just with no place to go?” said Kathleen Townsend, a member of both organizations. “We can hook them up to other resources. So, I think it just gives them a wonderful start.” Planning for the partnership began in late fall, with committee members engaging in discussions with coalition board members to assess their specific needs.

Members were provided with a list of needed items during the holiday season and brought these donations to the Feb. 3 meeting, where they collectively assembled 24 personal care kits.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

CONTINUED

These kits, designed for immediate distribution, equip the coalition with ready-to-use resources for individuals and families facing homelessness. “This (toiletry bags) is something that we give people. So they’re homeless, they don’t have anything, you know. Sometimes they’ve had to leave with nothing,” said Townsend.

During the Feb. 3 meeting, Townsend presented on the coalition’s needs. “People come and they don’t have gas for the car. If you can’t drive to work, you can’t go to work. If you can’t go to work, you can’t pay your rent. You can’t pay your rent, you’re homeless,” said Townsend. “So, it’s a cycle. So, we provide those beginning things which are so important, the gas cards, the food cards. We also provide hotels.”

In addition to the personal care kits, association members recognized the importance of other essential items. They purchased undergarments to supplement the coalition’s supplies and are exploring further support through donations of gas and grocery gift cards.

“We found out that they also appreciate gift cards with for gas or groceries and things like that,” said Weston. “We’re going to do some more brainstorming at our committee level to see how much what we can do to support that as well.”





# Pi(E) Day! Pi(E) Day! Pi(E) Day! Pi(E) Day!

AAUW Fort Atkinson has joined forces with Heart of the City and the Friends of the Library in a fundraiser revolving around March 14 (3.14 Pi!). We will be selling whole pies, sweet and savory, and slices, at the library during the afternoon from 2:00-5:30. Each organization will receive the funds generated by the pies donated by their own members. Each group is expected to have some volunteers on site to work. There has been a sign up form sent out to everyone, but if you did not see it, please contact Barb Rohland. If you have any questions in general you can contact Barb or Kathy Marr.



**PI(E) DAY**  
FUNDRAISER AT THE LIBRARY!



**FRIDAY, MARCH 14**  
**2PM-5:30PM** Sale will end earlier if we sell out!  
Dwight Foster Public Library

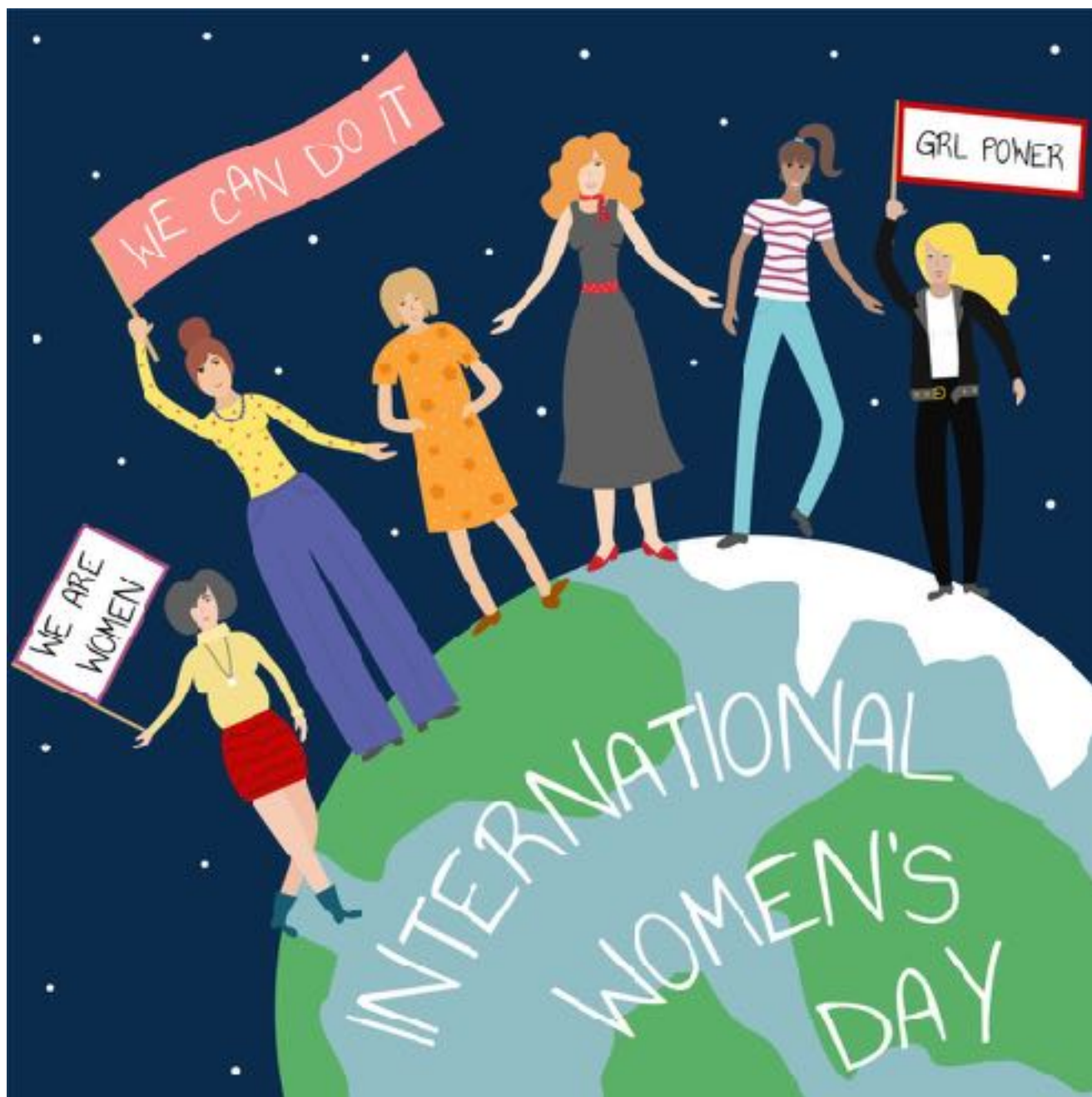
**Cash only sales**

\$3	slice
\$14	whole pie
\$5	mini pie
\$20	specialty pie (steak, venison and pot pies)

*Eat at the library or buy some to take home!*

A fundraiser for:

   **FRIENDS**  
OF THE DWIGHT FOSTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

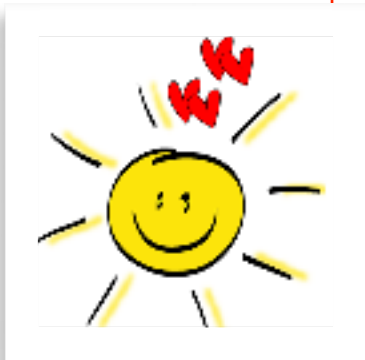


# International *Women's Day*

March 8



# This and That



## *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?**

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 a call at 920-309-2668** or text her and she will organize a ride for you.









