



Branch Beat

Mission Statement

Advancing gender equity through research, education and advocacy

Vision

Equity for all

Values

Nonpartisan. Fact-based.
Principled. Inclusive and
Intersectional

**"I am not free
while any
woman is
unfree, even
when her
shackles are
very different
from my own."
-Audre Lorde**

October Speaker:

Rep. Joan Fitzgerald



Joan Marie Fitzgerald is a member of the [Wisconsin State Assembly](#), representing [Wisconsin's 46th Assembly district](#) since [2025](#). She previously served five years as a member of the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors.

Joan was raised and educated in [Greendale, Wisconsin](#), graduating from [Greendale High School](#) in 1982. She attended the [University of Wisconsin–Whitewater](#), earning her bachelor's degree in secondary education, and then her master's in educational curriculum and instruction. She worked for 33 years as a high school math teacher for the School District of Jefferson before retiring in 2020.

Joan Fitzgerald obtained her first public office in 2019, when she was appointed to the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors.

In February 2024, Fitzgerald announced that she would run for [Wisconsin State Assembly](#). Her district, the 46th, is comprised of most of the western half of Jefferson County along with part of eastern Dane County. Fitzgerald won the election by 1,766 votes.

Representative Fitzgerald has authored two assembly bills related to firearms and two resolutions related to violence awareness. Her current committees are: Committee on Ways and Means, Committee on Workforce Development, Labor, and Integrated Employment.

Our format for the evening will be a question and answer session by our Public Policy Committee.



President's Corner



Welcome Back!

It's September, and most AAUW members' thoughts turn to our book sale (on Sept 5-6). Those of you who are involved in the book sale know that the work of the board and committees - especially the book sale committee - does not take a summer vacation. Please take the opportunity to let them know that their work is appreciated.

There is much to look forward to in the 2025-26 year in regard to programs, projects, and fundraisers. One of the most rewarding things that we do with some of the proceeds of our philanthropic endeavors is to support community schools and organizations. Focusing on things that are in our power to make the world (local, state, national or global) a better place keep us from falling into despair over things that are out of our control. And when do we (or should we) accept that something is not in our control?

In psychiatry we use a term called "agency"- the capacity of individuals to have the power and resources to fulfill their potential. Social structure consists of those factors of influence (such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, ability, customs) that determine or limit agents and their decisions. Hence, individuals in organizations such as ours take on the mantle of being agents of social change. But, at the same time, I think we need to find contentment, beauty, love and joy in an imperfect world. When I was a college student at UW-Madison (in the mid 70's) I got a "B" in a class (women's studies) - which was widely held to be a class where one could get an "easy A" - because the TA said I wasn't angry enough. I don't think the key for changing our role in society, as women who have pursued higher education, is being angry "enough"; but rather to have enough personal and collective agency to envision and create a path for change. I hope we continue to forge that path in the coming year.

— Barbara Rohland, Branch President



August 21, 2025

Account activity as of on-line view of accounts: \$10,183.64

Checking Account \$8,171.27

Saving Account \$2,012.37

Expenses since 07.01.2025 (start of '25 – '26 year) (non-membership related – by check #): -\$361.66

Opportunities Inc. (Book Sale Flyers & Bookmarks) - \$160.89 #3941

USPS (PO Box Renewal) - \$84.00 #3942

USPS (Stamps) - \$29.20 #3943

Walgreens (Envelopes) - \$4.00 (debit card)

Homeless Coalition of Fort Atkinson - \$83.577 #3944

**Donation from '24 – '25 total Happy Bucks donations*

Deposits since 07.01.2025 (non-membership or book sale related): \$275.00

School Supply Donations - \$275.00

Book Sale Deposits (01.01.2025 – 12.31.2025): \$571.79

No new deposits since 07.01.2025

Membership deposited: \$104.00

2025-2026 Philanthropic Funds Reserved: \$8,150.00

Scholarships: \$5,000 promised to Knox Scholarship Fund with Book Sale proceeds (to be sent after 2025 Book Sale completion)

Tech Savvy: \$250.00

Grants for Gals Donations: \$0

Adopt-a-School Fund: \$1,000 (from 2025 Book Sale + Pi Day Sale)

AAUW Greatest Needs Fund: \$1,900

Proposed 2025/2026 Annual Budget

The proposed budget for the 2025/2026 fiscal year will be voted on at the September meeting, following the Salad Supper. Attached to the email that includes this newsletter is a link to a PDF of the proposed budget for your review prior to the meeting. Please have your questions and comments ready for discussion during the meeting.



You and a guest are invited to

AAUW: Fort Atkinson's Annual

Salad Supper

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS:
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

— ♦ —

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

— ♦ —

5:30 PM SOCIAL TIME
6:00 PM DINNER

— ♦ —

PLEASE BRING A SALAD TO SHARE

Hoard Historical Museum
401 Whitewater Ave
Fort Atkinson, WI

Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee has selected the Fort Atkinson Food Pantry as our project for this year 2025-26.

We would like to ask our members to bring non-perishable food products to each of our meetings. This is going to be a fun project – we are organizing a creative building project that will take place in February. We will be seeking 10 to 12 teams to come and build these structures out of donations we collect or they bring to the event.



More information to follow as we select a place, date and rules of the contest. Keep watching for details!



Pantry's Current Wish List

- Pancake mix
- Pancake syrup
- Pork n beans
- Apple sauce
- 1# rice
- Canned pasta
- Canned chicken
- Peanut butter
- Canned fruit
- Watch their website as their needs change frequently!



It's Time to Work and SELL!

Set up day is Thursday, September 4th from noon until done. The sale begins Friday September 5th at 10:00 and runs until 6:00. On Friday the 6th, the sale begins at 9:00. At noon the bag sale begins and runs until 3:00. From 3:00-4:00 we will be offering remaining books for free (for instance the Janesville Branch) and selecting for specific donations. Clean up and tear down will begin at 4:00. We will be working until it is done!



State-Level Involvement

Member Mary Kay Weston has volunteered to be on the State Nominating Committee for the following State Positions – Program VP and Fund Development VP. These are two year terms.

- ◆ Program Vice-President – requirements program management skills and experience. She also has a list of duties as well.
- ◆ Development Vice-President – requirements fund raising, management skills, basic computer skills. She also has a list of duties as well.

Please let Mary Kay know if you are interest in either of these opportunities – 608-219-1997.

Scholarships

AAUW Scholarships Totaling \$29,000 Presented to Fourteen Local Women

The Fort Atkinson branch of AAUW (American Association of University Women) has presented fourteen scholarships to area women for the 2025-26 school year. The Fort Atkinson Community Foundation administers these funds which are supported by individual donations and our local AAUW's annual Used Book Sale is slated to take place on September 5 and 6 at the Fort Atkinson Municipal Building. The Fort Foundation manages the Jane Shaw Knox Undergraduate and Graduate scholarships along with the Second Chance Scholarship.

AAUW Second Chance Scholarship

The AAUW Second Chance Scholarship is available to women who plan to continue their education at a vocational or technical college or for undergraduate work, after having been out of the mainstream of education for more than one year. Applicants must be either a graduate of Fort Atkinson High School, a resident of Fort Atkinson, or be currently employed in Fort Atkinson. This year, a \$7,000 Second Chance Scholarship was awarded to Sage Simmons who will complete her undergraduate work. She is enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater seeking a bachelor's in finance. A \$4,000 Second Chance Scholarship was awarded to Jordan Hynum. She will be pursuing a degree in Marketing at UW-Madison. Jessica Penfield-Cruz received \$2,000 to complete her work in Spanish Education at UW-Whitewater under the Project Teach Program. Summer Semrau was granted a \$1,000 scholarship for a MATC program in Radiology.



Scholarships

AAUW Undergraduate Scholarship

The AAUW Jane Shaw Knox Undergraduate Scholarship is offered to women who are pursuing a bachelor's degree at an accredited college or university. Applicants must have already earned 45 credits toward their bachelor's degree to qualify for this scholarship. This year, a \$1,000 Undergraduate Scholarship was awarded to Lily Congdon who is pursuing a degree in Nursing from Carroll College, Tayanna Schwefel, working on her program in Occupational Therapy at UW-La Crosse. Evelyn Cruz Palacios will receive \$2,000 toward her program in Elementary Education. Kiara Wolfram is also receiving \$2,000 for UW-Madison majoring in Biochemistry.



Scholarships

AAUW Jane Shaw Knox Graduate Scholarship

The Jane Shaw Knox AAUW Graduate Scholarship is offered to women who are pursuing a graduate degree at an accredited college. Applicants must be either graduates of Fort Atkinson High School, residents of Fort Atkinson, or be employed in Fort Atkinson. This year, five Knox Graduate Scholarships were awarded. Juanita Tarp and Kaitlyn Schneider who are pursuing a master's degree were awarded \$1,000. Amy Griffin is pursuing Doctor of Physical Therapy from UW-Stevens Point and will receive \$2,000. Alexis Zwieg is pursuing a Nurse Practitioner degree in Women's Health and will also receive \$2,000. Erin Springstroh was granted \$2,000 at Edgewood College for a master's degree in education.

The Fort Atkinson AAUW branch promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change. One of the goals of AAUW is to directly fund and empower pathways to higher education for women. We make a difference in the lives of women!

Submitted by Vicki Wright, Scholarship Chair



AAUW Scholarship 2025 Update from Scholarship Recipient

My name is Amy Griffin and I am one of the recipients of an AAUW Jane Knox Graduate Scholarship. I am a graduate student in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at UW-Stevens Point. I am halfway through my program and will graduate next December. Since I began classes last week, I was unable to attend the awards but would like to extend my appreciation for this scholarship and provide an update on my educational journey.

I grew up in Jefferson, but have worked for several years within the Fort Atkinson community, including 3 years as a PT tech at Doctors of Physical Therapy. I earned my Bachelors in Kinesiology & a Certificate in Athletic Healthcare from UW-Madison in 2023. My goal has always been to enter a career in healthcare, and after my own experience of PT at Fort Healthcare & my experience working in the PT field at DPT, I am very sure of my choice to join the career of PT and offer the best care I can. I have gained a lot of great feedback so far from professors, clinicians, and peers, but I know I still have a lot more to learn on this journey. I cannot wait to continue learning and excelling in the field.

Tentatively, I will be completing a clinical rotation in Fort Atkinson next year, with the goal of finding a job post-graduation within the community as well. I am very proud of where I have come from and what I hope to still accomplish. Thank you for taking a chance and believing in me and my passion. I hope to make my family, friends, and community proud. Thank you and have a great night!



Fort Atkinson Branch Earns 5 Star Award

"The AAUW Five Star Program is designed to help branches align with AAUW's strategic priorities and advance our mission of achieving gender equity for women and girls. By participating in this program, our branch contributes to a strong network of advocates, elevating both our local impact and our collective efforts nationwide." **Fort Atkinson is one of only six branches in Wisconsin to qualify for five stars in 2025!**

About 5-Star Program

What is the purpose of the Five Star National Recognition Program? The program aims to provide branches with a framework to ensure they are financially healthy, sustainable, and aligned with AAUW's mission and priorities. Branches can earn a Star by meeting the criteria in one of the five categories: Advancement, Public Policy & Advocacy, Governance & Sustainability, Programming, and Communications & External Relations

Why is the Advancement Star particularly important?

The Advancement Star is a key financial indicator of a branch's health and sustainability, reflecting its support for AAUW National. Data for this Star is pulled from AAUW National's financial records and will be calculated on behalf of the branches. In January the national office shared a snapshot of where branches are in their Advancement star progress so they can make adjustments as needed before the end of the fiscal year.

What actions are encouraged under the Public Policy & Advocacy category? Actions can include appointing a public policy chair, conducting meetings with local Congress members, participating in state lobby days, and holding programs related to key policy topics.

What is the role of the Governance & Sustainability category in the Five Star program? This category focuses on leadership succession planning, overall participation in the Five Star program, appointing a Diversity Officer, and holding programs on justice, equity, diversity, or inclusion.

How does the Communications & External Relations category contribute to earning a Star? Branches must designate a communications point person, share posts aligned with AAUW's mission, include national information in newsletters, and ensure leaders are subscribed to AAUW emails.

So as you can see every member of our branch helps to make us a 5-Star Award winning branch. We can all celebrate this achievement.



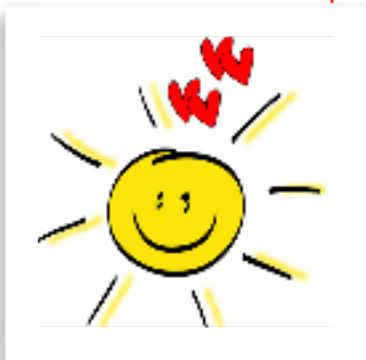
Hymn For The Hurting

by Amanda Gorman

Everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed and strange,
Minds made muddied and mute.
We carry tragedy, terrifying and true.
And yet none of it is new;
We knew it as home,
As horror,
As heritage.
Even our children
Cannot be children,
Cannot be.
Everything hurts.
It's a hard time to be alive,
And even harder to stay that way.
We're burdened to live out these days,
While at the same time, blessed to outlive them.
This alarm is how we know
We must be altered —
That we must differ or die,
That we must triumph or try.
Thus while hate cannot be terminated,
It can be transformed
Into a love that lets us live.
May we not just grieve, but give:
May we not just ache, but act;
May our signed right to bear arms
Never blind our sight from shared harm;
May we choose our children over chaos.
May another innocent never be lost.
Maybe everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed & strange.
But only when everything hurts



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.

