



Branch Beat

Merry Christmas and Happy New Years!

It's been another great and successful year for the Fort Atkinson branch of AAUW and we are going to end it in style with the Cocoa and Carols Holiday Auction on December 8th at 5:30 at the Hoard Museum. Bring yourself, bring a white elephant gift, and bring a friend if you can. Checkbooks welcome too, because a little birdie told me there will be many great gifts to bid on!

So Happy Holidays to All!

Cocoa & Carols Holiday Auction

Please join AAUW-Fort Atkinson
Monday December 8th
at the Hoard Museum

5:30p social

6p dinner with auction to follow

Members are encouraged to bring:

- an auction item
- a white elephant item
- Guests!

Brought to you by the
Special Events Committee





President's Corner



AAUW Mission

To empower, inspire and connect women from all walks of life, fostering personal and professional growth through networking, education, and support. We aim to create a nurturing environment that encourages women to reach their full potential, break barriers, and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Our goal is to provide resources, opportunities, and a platform for women to thrive, succeed, and make a positive impact in the world.

This was the information I found (courtesy of AI) when I googled AAUW. There has been a lot of discussion about what constitutes educational equivalence to an associate college degree as the criteria for membership in AAUW. However defining, let alone verifying educational equivalence to an associate degree has very little to do with the goals of the organization.

The arguments about broadening the scope of our membership are less about educational achievement and more about identifying and inviting in people with a shared goal to create an equal playing field for a girl or woman in today's society in order to achieve equity.

So my recommendation for criteria to join AAUW is very simple: endorse the mission of the organization.

Endorse education. Not only that which is acknowledged by credits and certificates but includes experience, mentorship, apprenticeship and, most importantly, a commitment to lifelong education.

If AAUW wants to make progress on the path they are on, they need to acknowledge that their focus has become broader in scope than the achievement of a degree or certificate from an accredited institution. We need to focus more on who we can bring in rather than who we should keep out.

Wisconsin is predominantly a rural state. Women growing up in central and northern Wisconsin ($\frac{2}{3}$ of the state in terms of land mass) do not have the same access to advanced degrees as people in more urban states and regions. Barriers are geographic (need to go farther away from home to attend school or college), economic and cultural. It does not mean that women who grow up there or choose to live there do not want, or are not capable of achieving, success. It just means that they must do it using nontraditional resources.

I don't think we should or can decide on membership based on who is smart enough, educated enough or successful enough. I think we need to take people where they are at and support them in becoming who they want to be.



— Barbara Rohland, Branch President

MEETING MINUTES



November Meeting November 3, 2025, Trinity Lutheran Church

Program by Pam Dennis on Autism

Call to Order by President Barbara Rohland 7:46pm.

Approval of Minutes of October 6 meeting. (Thea/Tina) Approved

Approval of Treasurer's Report (Maggie/Kathy) Approved

Committee Reports:

Outreach – Mary Kay Weston

Update on “Cantastic” event on January 31, 2026 at Hoard Museum. Looking for 10 teams of 5. Cash prizes. Community to vote on sculptures week after event. Have 4 sponsors right now.

Holiday event – Brittany Noe

The Most Fun Event of the Year! December 8 at Hoard Museum. Bring a guest and an auction item and a white elephant item. Theme “Carols and Cocoa.”

Membership – Thea Reeves

Updated directories are available. Working on name badges.

Adjourned 7:57 (Mary Kay/Renee)



November 13, 2025

Account activity as of on-line view of accounts: \$12,870.32

Checking Account	\$10,863.79
Saving Account	\$2,006.53

Expenses since 10.20.2025 (non- membership related – by check #): - \$270.00

Hoard Historical Museum Membership - \$50.00 #3950

The Baldwin Group (General Liability Insurance '26 – '27) - \$220.00 #3951

Deposits since 10.20.2025 (non-membership or book sale related): \$0

Book Sale Deposits (01.01.2025 – 12.31.2025): \$8,721.53

Book Sale Event - \$6,207.16

Book Sale Online - \$2,714.37

**\$100 online sale from Pam Dennis received 11.03.2025*

**\$475.03 online sale from Barb Rohland received 11.03.2025*

Membership deposited: \$39.00

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

Scholarships: \$5,000 to Knox Scholarship Fund with Book Sale proceeds (funded 10.09.2025)

Tech Savvy: \$250.00

Grants for Gals Donations: \$1,000.00

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

AAUW Greatest Needs Fund: \$1,900
(\$30 per member (2/26 number) + 15% over 2025 contribution)

SCHOLARSHIPS

Our Fort Atkinson Branch of AAUW is extremely fortunate to have donors to our scholarship funds which are invested and managed by the Fort Atkinson Community Foundation. Each year approximately 4% of the account balance is approved by the Foundation for us to award scholarships. Our scholarship committee of Brittany Noe, Barbara Roland, Emily Jackson, and Vicki Wright determine who will receive money each year which must then be approved by the Foundation Board. It is a tremendous amount of reading and work to determine who will receive our scholarships. I am extremely grateful to them for their willingness to work on this committee.

This year we will have available:

- Grants for Gals - \$1,500 (Grants for Gals is managed by a separate committee)
- Second Chance – \$14,000
- Jane Knox Undergraduate and Graduate - \$12,000

Each year we have approximately the same amount of money available from the Foundation accounts. We are fortunate this year to have an additional \$1000 to award for scholarships from a new donation. The Janice Zastrow Trust added \$31,739 each to the Second Chance and the Jane Knox scholarship funds at the Foundation which is a total donation of \$63,478.

Our AAUW branch will have \$26,000 to give in scholarships for the 2026-27 school year. Awards will be determined in May, 2026 for our Fort Atkinson scholarships. Jefferson Foundation awards will also be determined at that time.

— Vicki Wright

Greetings From the Capital – Joan Fitzgerald

The months of October and November have been busy ones here in Madison. Lots of committees are meeting, and we have had three full Assembly Session days.

During the October 7th session day, we focused on housing bills that included a Condominium Conversion Grant Program, updates to the approval process for approving subdivisions, TIF/TID updates, mandating zoning ordinances to allow accessory dwelling units, and modifications to housing programs offered by WHEDA. The lack of affordable housing of all types continues to be a major concern for all of us here in the Assembly.

On October 14th, we celebrated First Responder Appreciation Day by recognizing one first responder from each of the 99 Assembly Districts. I was pleased to recognize Deputy William Dandoy from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department for his amazing work over the last three decades. I was especially thankful for the opportunity to thank Deputy Dandoy for the work he has done in local school districts with active shooter training.

Finally, on November 19th we met to vote on dozens of bills. Among a variety of miscellaneous items, many of the bills related to:

- Election Reform - One of the most popular and necessary reforms, Monday night absentee ballot canvassing, was not included. Democrats did try to amend the bill to include this, but Republicans voted against bringing the amendment to the floor for an actual vote.
- Funding Services for Homeless Veterans - This is incredibly necessary funding, and these bills earned the support of the majority of the legislature. There is more to be done to ensure that our veterans receive all the needed resources, but these bills are a good start.
- School Consolidation - These six bills brought out some of the most spirited conversations of the day. The stark contrast between the two sides of the aisle was on full display as we debated the best way to move forward and support mostly rural schools facing declining enrollment. Years of underfunding public schools and increasing funding of the voucher program have left schools with few options. The message from Democrats was, and always will be, public schools are the heart of their communities, and instead of closing public schools, we should be funding them.

Of particular interest to many of you might be the bill we voted on related to funding a pilot program to create professional development for science teachers. The bill would ask the DPI to work with non-profit organizations in the state to develop and implement trainings. While I did support this bill as a first step, my comments on the assembly floor encouraged my colleagues to do better than this poorly funded and inadequate attempt to improve science instruction in the state.

It looks like we may be meeting one more time before Christmas, and if we do, I'll make sure to keep you updated. If you have specific concerns or questions, feel free to contact me at Rep.Fitzgerald@legis.wisconsin.gov or call my office at 608-237-9146.

The (Public Policy) committee continues to work on several projects including focus on election issues and getting out the vote. I have included in this report several links that might be useful to individuals and branches as they continue to inform themselves.

The Public Policy Committee is open to everyone and meets twice a month on the second and third Monday of the month at 4 PM. All information is sent to committee members, Branch presidents, and WI Board members. If you are interested in joining the committee contact, Stephanie Malaney smalaney5@aol.com.

AAUW WI Public Policy <https://aauw-wi.aauw.net/public-policy/>

Public Policy Drop Down Menu

2024-26 AAUW WI Public Policy Statement Resolutions

Resources listed on Public Policy Page

[Connect the Dots](#)

[Amplify Your Voice](#)

[Wisconsin deserves fair maps \(Video\)](#)

[Facts About Public, Private and Charter Schools \(PowerPoint\)](#)

[Facts About Public, Private and Charter Schools \(Fact Sheet\)](#)

[AAUW Information on School Funding \(Fact Sheet\)](#)

AAUW Resources

Explore the Issues <https://www.aauw.org/issues/>

Education <https://www.aauw.org/issues/education/>

Economic Security <https://www.aauw.org/issues/economic-security/>

Social Justice & Civil Rights <https://www.aauw.org/issues/civil-rights/>

Advocacy

Take Action <https://www.aauw.org/act/>

Signup for Action Network <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

There are several actions on the page for members.

AAUW Public Policy Priorities <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/aauw-public-policy-priorities/>

Policy Updates <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/documents/>

Check on AAUW work

Advocacy Toolkit <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/>

Election Resources <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/get-involved-in-elections/>

AAUW T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE!

There is still time to order an AAUW t-shirt but don't delay! Order and payment is due by the Holiday party on December 8th. There are several styles to choose from but all shirts will feature an embroidered AAUW logo and the "Empowering Women Since 1881".

Since our district is hosting the state convention next year it was decided that it would be a great idea if our members had matching shirts. The shirts will also be handing for other public events where we are representing the branch.

AAUW T-Shirt Orders

All shirts are embroidered with the AAUW logo and the motto, "Empowering Women Since 1881".



	Style 1-women	Style 2-women	Style 3-women	Style 4-men
				
	Short-Sleeve V-Neck Polyester	Long-sleeve V-neck Polyester	Long-sleeve Crew neck Cotton <i>Slightly different blue</i>	Long-sleeve Crew neck Cotton <i>Slightly different blue</i>
Sizes & Prices: The polyester shirts are true to size. The cotton shirts may shrink a little, so you might want to consider ordering up a size.				
S, M, L, XL	\$18	\$20	\$18	\$18
2X	\$20	\$22	\$20	\$20
3X	\$22	\$24	\$22	\$22
4X	Polyester shirts not available in 4X		\$24	\$24

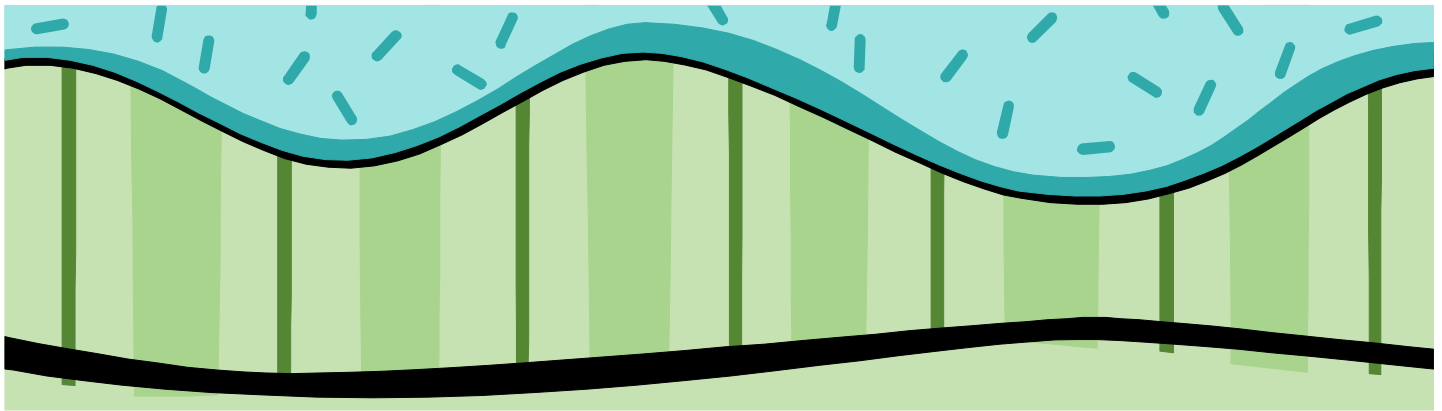
To order: Send your name and email address and the quantity of each style you want to purchase to Jennifer Ondrejka, jondrejka@gmail.com. Send the purchase price to your branch.

Outreach Committee

**Worth a
Repeat!!**

The Outreach Committee is still continuing our Fort Atkinson Food Pantry – CAN-DO Challenge. We are finishing up on gathering 4 sponsors to cover prize money along with seeking 10 teams to participate. If you are a member of any club/business/organization that would be interested in putting together a team, please see one of our committee members – Mary Kay, Kathy C, Susan D. Renee B, Vicki W, or Lisa T.

Also we are continuing to collect donated food items at each of our general meetings to drop off at the food pantry directly.



TEAMS BUILD. THE COMMUNITY WINS.

AAUW – FORT ATKINSON CAN-DO CHALLENGE!!

TEAMS BUILD STRUCTURES OF NON-PERISHABLE GOODS TO BENEFIT THE FORT ATKINSON FOOD PANTRY.
VOTE FOR THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD! BRING DONATIONS!

JANUARY 31, 2026, 9:00 AM. - 3:00 P.M.

LOCATION: HOARD HISTORICAL MUSEUM

REGISTER YOUR TEAM TODAY! SPACE IS LIMITED. FORMS AND INFO AVAILABLE AT:

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AAUWFORTATKINSONWI/](https://www.facebook.com/AAUWFORTATKINSONWI/) OR THE MUSEUM.

BRING COMPLETED FORMS AND REGISTRATION FEE TO THE MUSEUM.

Mission Statement

Advancing gender equity through research, education and advocacy

Vision

Equity for all

Values

Nonpartisan. Fact-based. Principled. Inclusive and Intersectional

**Wisconsin 105th State AAUW
Convention.
Mark your calendars for
April 17 - 18, 2026 at
DoubleTree by Hilton Madison
Watch for more information in the
coming months.**

Membership Forward!

The State of Wisconsin's motto is "Forward," adopted as the official state motto in 1851. It reflects Wisconsin's ongoing drive to be a national leader and its commitment to progress and innovation. The statue on the Capitol building in Madison is named Forward and faces south. It symbolizes the start of a new day and progress.

AAUW WI also has these goals and aspirations in fulfilling AAUW's mission. One way this is accomplished is by the active role the membership plays at the branch and state levels. Carol Surges, the previous AAUW WI Membership VP, laid down a challenge at the end of the last fiscal year to add 13 new members to the branches to move ahead (Forward) and surpass Illinois. This would put AAUW WI in the top five nationally for membership.

As of today, there are 78 new members! What an accomplishment! Other factors will determine whether AAUW WI will make the top five states list for membership. I would say, though, that we are well on our way.

Feb 1, 2026, is the day National takes the final membership count, so there is plenty of time to continue this growth. In addition to adding new members, retaining our current members is very important. While unavoidable factors such as the death of a member, a move to another area, and students graduating can lead to a decrease in branch membership, providing a mix of mission-based programs and fun meetings is an essential way to retain current members.

By Judy Hangartner, Membership VP AAUW-WISCONSIN, November 2025 Badger Brief

Women's History

All of us probably know something about Lilly Ledbetter, fighter for women's (and everyone's) right to fair pay for equal work. She didn't set out to be a trailblazer, but like many before and after her, she found herself in a situation where she was facing years of unfair treatment at work. But unlike others, she said no more and began a years long battle against Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. that was personally painful and exhausting and seemingly unwinnable but she persevered through sheer guts and gumption.



Google! brief bio: Lilly Ledbetter (1938–2024) was an American equal pay activist who became a national figure after her sex discrimination lawsuit against Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. reached the Supreme Court. Although she lost her case due to the statute of limitations, her fight led Congress to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, which made it easier to sue over pay discrimination. After the ruling, she became a public speaker and author, advocating for women's rights and workplace equality.

There is a movie currently running on Netflix called “**Lilly**”, starring Patricia Clarkson as Lilly Ledbetter. The movie follows Lilly Ledbetter and the groundbreaking Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. case. There are a fair number of clips of interviews with Ruth Bader Ginsburg discussing the importance of Lilly and the case she brought forward against Goodyear. The movie does an excellent job of following the legal maneuvering on both sides of the case, but even more importantly the effects of the case on her and her family...and all people after President Obama signed the subsequent Ledbetter bill into law.



It is a well done movie covering what could be a dull legal case in a very clear and very interesting way and on the personal side avoids falling into trite and potentially hokey arena.

I give it two thumbs up!

Fort Atkinson Food Pantry's Current Wish List:

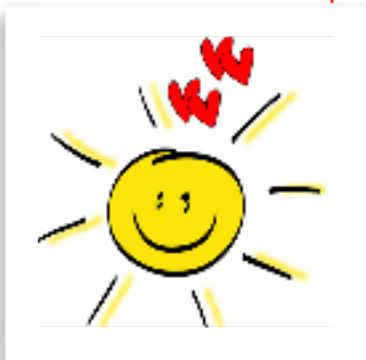


- ✦ Pancake Mix
- ✦ Pancake Syrup
- ✦ Pork N Beans
- ✦ Apple Sauce
- ✦ 1lb Rice
- ✦ Canned Pasta
- ✦ Canned Chicken
- ✦ Peanut Butter

Don't forget to bring your non-perishable food donations to the December 8th party!

*Cheers to a
Happy New Year
and all the Possibilities
it May Bring!*

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.

