



The Apple Branch

American Association of University Women
Appleton, Wisconsin



Serving the Greater Fox Cities Area

Volume 40 Number 4 December 2025



**APPLETON (WI)
BRANCH**

What's Happening This Month...

DECEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2 Second Choice Books	3	4	5	6 Holiday Brunch
7	8	9	10 Art Class	11 Evening Literature	12	13
14	15 Newsletter Articles Due 1st Day of Hannukah	16	17 Afternoon Literature	18	19	20
21	22 Last Day of Hannukah	23	24	25 Christmas	26 Kwanzaa begins	27
28	29	30	31 New Years Eve			

President's Page

Hello Friends,

I recently read about how the ancient Greeks thought about time. New York Times writer Melissa Kirsch had some interesting observations that seemed worth sharing.

The Greeks recognized time as we usually think of it, but also the times we describe with phrases such as "the right time," or "the moment of opportunity," or "a golden memory" Doing what just feels right without too much analysis was called Kairos by the Greeks, and they recognized that those moments were there if we are awake and aware enough to realize it. Actual time seems suspended for a bit as friends linger over dinner together, a mother reaches for her newborn, and for us in AAUW as we reflect after book sale and realize that we've been part of a significant event- those are times of Kairos. Time suspended, yet precious.

I hope you were part of the effort to make our book sale a financial and community success, and felt moments of knowing how important your presence was. I experienced Kairos every time I entered the sale and took in the magnitude of our work. And when the clerk from Bath and Body Works came in with bags of sample products that the store staff wanted us to have because of the great event we had brought to them, we shared a brief look around, taking it all in before she rushed back to work. I felt it again when I met our eager young members so excited by the positivity of the sale, and when longtime treasured friends shared a laugh or just a proud look around as we worked. Realizing a shopper was one of our scholarship recipients gave us both a chance to remember why we do this. Kairos feels good!

Last fall, I wrote of the Japanese concept of Ikigai. That term expresses another benefit of your AAUW membership: the feeling that your life is worthwhile, that you are accomplishing good for others with people you care about. Certainly sounds like AAUW to me. Ikigai feels good!

One challenge that is weighing heavily on me, though, is finding members who are willing to help in new ways. It's vital that any organization has members who help out in various ways for various time periods. Fresh faces bring fresh thinking, and that is the hallmark of a healthy branch.

When I was asked to be president, I laughed. I am too old. I have a husband who needs me. I hadn't had a board position in years! It was ridiculous to even consider. And yet. As I thought about the job, I realized it required what I enjoy- talking, writing, and encouraging. I could do a lot of the job at home, set my own schedule. I thought of all of my friends in the branch, and I wanted to add purpose and connection to my life.

And it's worked. I've had a feeling of doing the right thing for this phase of my life. I feel I've helped. I've loved the friendships. It's Kairos AND Ikigai AAUW style!

Which brings me to YOU. Consider a new role in AAUW as you decide what might feel right. Join us at a board meeting so you get a feel for what that's all about. We need some assistant VPs for membership, finance, program. Yes, we have wonderful leaders now, but they, like me, are ready to hand off the baton. You will have so much support. We will answer your calls and meet to talk if you're unsure or have an idea. It's usually a 2 year commitment, not a life term!

I hope you are ready to open yourself to taking a chance on helping AAUW Appleton in a new way. We need you! And maybe the time is right for you.

Hopefully,

Faye Binsfeld, President



AAUW Appleton Program News

Last-minute reminders for our Dec. 6th Brunch attendees:



*

Timing: 8:30 a.m. Gather at Bridgewood in Neenah
9:15 a.m. Brunch Buffet begins

*

Bag Raffle Items: We can still use more items for the bag raffle. Bag items are smaller items such as notecards, scarves, soaps, jewelry etc. or homemade items including breads, cookies, candy, or other fresh things. **Bag raffle donations will still be accepted on the day of the brunch.** Drop them off near the nametag table in the lobby.

*

Cash/checkbook: Don't forget your money! The brunch celebration is also a fundraiser; it's our only fundraiser in which the monies generated, go directly to our branch. In addition to buying tickets for the bag raffle, there will be both a silent and an oral auction, with some lively bidding taking place. Lucky winners of those can pay for their purchases with cash or checks. You may also want an extra dollar for a new game 😊.

Program News for 2026

Please join us for our first branch meeting in 2026

Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Time: 6:30 p.m. for Program, 7:30 p.m. meeting

Place: ZOOM meeting (link will be sent in early January)

Topic: Welcome to the Struggle and Finding a Space with presenter
Amanda Florence Garcia Goodenough

Ms. Goodenough was the closing keynote speaker at last year's AAUW-WI state convention. You won't want to miss her presentation!



AAUW Appleton Membership News

We welcome Kara Koerner to the Appleton Branch. Kara currently works as a Student Success Coach at UW-Green Bay. She has the distinction of being one of our past scholarship recipients. Kara was already an active volunteer at the book sale. We're excited to involve her in other branch activities!

Kathy O'Connor-Membership VP



AAUW Appleton Public Policy Update

Recently, Faye Binsfeld and I (and there were other AAUW members there too!) attended an information session hosted by our fellow non-partisan Women's Action Coalition member, the League of Women Voters of Appleton - Fox Valley. We were there to learn about the "*Unite and Rise 8.5*" initiative launched by the national LWV. The one goal of this is "to activate 8.5 million people to rise up and take action through peaceful yet powerful civic engagement to defend and preserve our democracy." It was inspiring to see the crowd of ordinary citizens there to learn and show support.

On November 7, 2025 AAUW National stated:

*The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is proud to join the League of Women Voters of the United States and fellow women-led organizations as part of the Grassroots Power Partners initiative, a key component of the League's **Unite and Rise 8.5** campaign. Together, these partners are mobilizing women and communities across the country to expand civic participation, foster equity, and build a stronger, more inclusive democracy.*

We can be so proud of AAUW for being part of this movement. Our November branch meeting was a kick-off for learning more how to be **active and engaged** as we expressed our support of the new WI-ERA bill.

Thank you to all who sent a postcard and made your voice heard! It's not too late to send your message. Find your legislator at myvotewi.gov and send a postcard or email!

You can reach your legislators by mail at one of the following addresses:

Representatives whose last names begin with a letter from A to L:

P. O. Box 8952, Madison, 53708-8952

Representatives whose last names begin a letter from M to Z:

P. O. Box 8953, Madison, 53708-8953

All Senators:

P. O. Box 7882, Madison, 53707-7882

Becky O'Connor, AAUW-Appleton Public Policy Chair



Our US Constitution was built with “checks and balances” to ensure that no one branch of the government—executive, legislative and/or judicial—would control the nation. So, how’s that going?

Please join us for an expert examination of each of the three branches through a legal lens and discuss what that means to our government today. The sessions include insights from nationally-known speakers in the field followed by an interactive discussion of the ideas presented.

All sessions are at Appleton Public Library upstairs, Mary Beth Nienhaus Community Rooms. Please click each session you would like to register to attend.

[Session 2, 12/3/25: The Crisis In Our Legislative Branch With Eleanor Neff Powell - 12/3/2025](#)

Wednesday, December 3, 6:30-8:00. Room C

[The Crisis in Our Legislative Branch with Eleanor Neff Powell](#), Professor of Political Science at UW-Madison

[Legal Issues-Constitutional Crisis - session 3/3-The Crisis in Our Judicial Branch, Stephen Vladeck - 12/17/2025](#)

Wednesday, December 17, 6:30-8:00. Room B

[The Crisis in our Judicial Branch with Stephen Vladeck](#), Law Professor at Georgetown University Law Center.

View the latest issue of Badgers Briefs here:
[AAUW BADGER BRIEFS NOVEMBER 2025 ISSUE](#)



Save the date!
April 17 -18 2026
105th State Convention
DoubleTree by Hilton
Madison East

AAUW Reads



Link for the November 25th Zoom Discussion of Part 1:

Time: Nov 25, 2025 06:30 PM Central Time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88940752727>

Meeting ID: 889 4075 2727

Our book study is off to a great start!

We will take the month of December off. So, if you were not able to be at one of the November discussions...you have time to get caught up and join one of the conversations!

The next sessions are:

Monday, Jan. 26 at 1:00 at Becky O'Connor's home (RSVP to Becky O'Connor)

Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 6:30 on Zoom (RSVP to Judy Goodnight)

For the January discussions we will read Part 2, Chapters 19-31

Becky O'Connor and Judy Goodnight

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION NEWS

A documentary that was recommended to me is “Deconstructing Karen” which is available on Amazon Prime. The documentary focuses on a dinner party where white women are challenged to confront their complicity in systemic racism. It addresses implicit bias and the experiences of marginalized people. Reviews are mixed but may be worth a watch.

December Diversity Calendar:

Dec 1 World AIDS Day

Dec 2 International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

Dec 3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Dec 10 International Human Rights Day

Dec 18 International Migrants Day

Linda Buck, DEI Chair

AAUW December Art Class by Zoom

When: Wednesday, December 10

Time: 12:30 pm (Central Time)

Media: Watercolor

This class will be using watercolor to create a snowy work of art.



Materials needed:

Watercolor Set

Watercolor paper - “9x12” 140 lb.

8, 6 and 2 round watercolour brushes

Crayons

4-5 sheets of copy paper

Scissors

Pencil and eraser

Sea Salt

Paper towels

Container of water

Please RSVP to Laurie Leonard at: rjllal2024@gmail.com by Friday, December 5 and she will send you the Zoom Link.

SECOND CHOICE BOOKS

Our December book is *Everyone This Christmas Has a Secret* by Benjamin Stevenson.

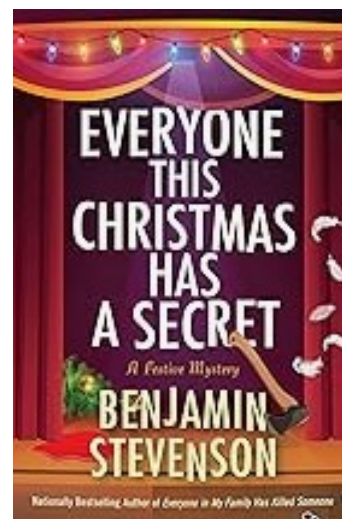
We'll meet on **December 2nd** at **1:00 pm**.

RSVP to Judy Goodnight at judy@gwd.org or 920.729.9553 by **November 30th** to get the location.

RSVPs are a must when we meet at restaurants!

Our January book is *The Wedding People* by Alison Espach.

Second Choice Books is open to all members of the branch.



AFTERNOON LITERATURE

Our December book is *Christmas with the Queen*.

Authors: Hazel Gaynor & Heather Webb

Wednesday 12/17, 11:30 AM

Heckrodt Nature Center

Discussion Leader: Joan Schneider

If you missed the W & Th sign-ups, contact Mary Grace ASAP.

If you are not a current member of this group & are interested in joining, contact Judy Goodnight at judy@gwd.org.



Thursday Evening Book Group

Thursday, December 11, 2025, 6:30 PM

Book: *Small Things Like These*, by Claire Keegan

Host: Sylvia Bull (address and contact info in yearbook)

Discussion Leader: Rachel Edwards

Please RSVP to Sylvia (not Donna) by noon on Wednesday, the 10th, or before, if possible.

All members are welcome!

Don't forget, this will be our last meeting until March 12, 2026, since we take January and February off.





WE DID IT! WE DID IT!

Congratulations to all of us! We just finished our most successful book sale in history. We had the most books, the most customers, and the largest profit ever! So many branch members participated, several donating countless hours to making the sale happen. The location was perfect and we are so hoping that nobody rents our store and we can return there next year. A huge Thank You to all of you from your book sale chairs!

Book Sale 2025 By the Numbers – Becky O'Connor

- 88 – years AAUW Appleton has been having a book sale
- 12 – months our book sale committee has been planning our book sale
- 2249 – boxes sorted before the sale
- 27,000 – children's books sorted for display by the children's team
- 325 - posters printed and distributed
- 2400 – spring bookmarks printed and distributed
- 4000 – fall bookmarks printed and distributed
- 10 – bookmarks from 2024 I accidentally gave out this year (oops)
- 10 – people who got those book marks still wandering around the Northland Mall looking for the sale
- 300 – dollars spent for gas by Laurie on book pick-ups
- 58 – times a book pick-up person was overheard saying “this is my last year”
- 150 – the largest number of boxes in one pick-up
- 134 – tables used for the sale
- 86 – number of boards used at the sale for book shelves
- 25 – number of dealers on the first Thursday
- 145 – number of dealer boxes sold on the first Thursday
- 200 – people standing in line waiting to get in on the first Thursday – longest line ever and counted by Janice, the mall coordinator
- 3185 – times we collectively said “paperbacks are a dollar, hard cover two dollars except for fiction trade books which are two dollars and yes, that includes children's books” during the first weekend
- 5 – number of original Trivial Pursuit games sold
- 5 – spouses wondering why someone would buy an original Trivial Pursuit game and plan to donate it back next year
- 11 – days Lou Chicquette brought us homemade scones
- 191 – scones we devoured and used as therapy in the break room
- 9 – book sale chairs who worried and woke up nights and wore themselves ragged paying attention to every detail of the book sale
- 467 – eye rolls and deep sighs given out by previously mentioned book sale chairs
- 1 – time Glenn supposedly went into the recycling dumpster
- 23 – times Betsy considered moving her knee surgery up to avoid the book sale
- 1 – time a customer stated “ this is more organized than Barnes and Noble”

Book Sale 2025 By the Numbers – Becky O'Connor

1000+ - children's books sold and donated to community organizations including the Tri County Community Dental Clinic, the Salvation Army, after school programs
200+ - books purchased for assisted living libraries and other adult facilities
36 – number of shifts Mary set up, averaging 8 members per shift plus book sale chairs at each shift
25 – number of shifts Marion set up in the children's department, averaging 2 members per shift
95 – total members who volunteered at least one shift...but many taking multiple shifts and a core group working endless hours
249 – comments on the Fox River Mall Facebook page about our book sale
203 – comments on the Fox River Mall Facebook page about the death of Santa
357 – shares on the Fox River Mall Facebook page about our book sale
299 – shares on the Fox River Mall Facebook page about the death of Santa
1 – top idea for Trish's book mark next year is "We Are More Popular Than Santa"
2 – records broken at the mall by AAUW for social media attention and draining the ATM machine
1 – special notice given to Kathryn for AAUW being top depositor of the month at the North Shore Bank
Too Many to Count – visitors to our book sale, many new to the sale
Too Many to Count – times AAUW members were mumbling "where did I park my car" while leaving a long shift
Too Many to Count – the number of books we set out (the most ever and the least left over, according to Goodwill)
Too Many to Count – times we were complimented, appreciated, greeted, and thanked by our customers
1000+ – followers we now have on our branch Facebook page (pre-sale 893 followers)
1 – guy who complained that we did not have the one book he was looking for and was quite appalled that we did not have it, actually, and seemed annoyed when I said "maybe it's so popular people don't want to give it away"
140 – women who make up the Appleton Branch (the best branch in the country)
60,000+ - dollars earned for scholarships and advocacy thorough the determination and hard work of all of us and the incredible leadership of the book sale chairs

Priceless – times we encouraged, supported, cheered, laughed and lifted each other up during this amazing effort. The book sale is over but after a bit of rest...we know that we need to work harder than ever in the days and months to come to advocate for issues important to AAUW.

AAUW Appleton Branch Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2025
Meeting room @ Appleton Public Library

The meeting was called to order by President Faye Binsfeld at 7:30 PM. following an informative explanation of the need for an independent redistricting commission for Wisconsin by Penny Bernard-Schaber. She explained the work of the committee thus far, the legislative process involved and the plan for the future, exhorting everyone to let their legislators know their own opinions on the matter .

Becky O'Connor, Public Policy Committee chair, made postcards, addresses, etc. available to all to contact representatives in Madison.

Jeanne Seitz reminded all to make their reservations with Grace Fuller for the December 6th Holiday Brunch. Jeanne urged those who would like to donate items for the fundraiser to get them to the committee soon and asked for help for the day of the brunch.

Lisa Balster, Program Vice-President, announced that the January and February meetings will be ZOOM meetings and advised all to watch for online information on upcoming events. She also shared current information on the diversity statistics and demographics of the Fox Valley.

Kathy O'Connor introduced our newest member (in absentia) and a guest.

Mary Grace reported on the grand success of our 2025 Used Book Sale, thanking everyone who helped. We will have almost \$60,000 to donate this year. (See January treasurer's report for details). Pat Hauser and Diane Vanderheiden have agreed to help on the committee for 2026.

Chris Taylor reminded all to read the most recent Badger Briefs newsletter, available on our website, for details on the state convention in Madison April 17-18, 2026.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Connie Polley, Secretary

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN - APPLETON BRANCH

TREASURER'S REPORT

OCTOBER 31, 2025

AAUW Appleton Branch Net Assets

North Shore Bank, General Checking #1472

General Fund \$ 92,420.33

Scholarship Fund - Money Market #1907

\$ 16,999.13

TOTAL Assets \$ 109,419.46

Less bills due \$ -

NET ASSETS \$ 109,419.46

Year To Date Operating Statement Checking

	<u>Current Month</u>	<u>Actual to Date</u>	<u>2025/2026</u>	<u>Variance</u>
General Revenues				
Branch Dues	\$ 45.00	\$ 505.00	\$ 2,025.00	\$ 1,520.00
December Raffle			\$ 1,229.00	\$ 1,229.00
Interest	\$ 0.40	\$ 0.55	\$ 24.00	\$ 23.45
Advertisement		\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ -
Total Revenue	\$ 45.40	\$ 555.55	\$ 3,328.00	\$ 2,772.45
General Expenses				
Membership/Recruiting	0	\$ 71.74	\$ 400.00	\$ 328.26
Financial Aid	0	0	\$ 154.00	\$ 154.00
Newsletter	0	0	\$ -	\$ -
Programs	0	\$ 475.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 325.00
Yearbook	\$ 397.46	\$ 397.46	\$ 400.00	\$ 2.54
Insurance (Split with Book Sale	\$ 869.00	\$ 869.00	\$ 400.00	\$ (469.00)
Public Policy	0	0	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Historian's Expenses	0	0	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
President's Expenses	0	0	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Finance Expenses	0	86.91	\$ 150.00	\$ 63.09
General Expenses	0	50	\$ 100.00	\$ 50.00
Woman's Action Coalition	0	0	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Brunch	0	0	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Special Event	0	0	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Diversity (new)	0	0	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Total Expense	\$ 1,266.46	\$ 1,950.11	\$ 3,304.00	\$ 1,353.89

***\$2,482.30 from the brunch will be added to the Leadership Development Fund

***Membership dues are based on 135 members projected at \$15/member

***Financial Assistance based on national dues of \$77 per each of 2 recipients

Faye's Poetry Corner

Like You

Roque Dalton

Like you, I
love, love life, the sweet smell
of things, the sky-blue
landscape of January days.

And my blood boils up
and I laugh through eyes
that have known the buds of tears.

I believe the world is beautiful
and that poetry, like bread, is for
everyone.

And that my veins don't end in me
but in the unanimous blood
of those who struggle for life,
love,
little things,
landscape and bread,
the poetry of everyone.

- to all the people helping

Donna Ashworth

Perhaps, this world is broken
on fire, doomed to expire
but right this second, *somewhere*
someone has flowers in their hair
to bring the light, and someone
sits awake, all night
just to hold a hand, take a look
there are people running miles
in silly suits, to show their care
and yes this world is shattered
everywhere, but there is glue
and it is me and it is you
picking up pieces of each other
to get through.



AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

The Apple Branch is a publication of the Appleton, Wisconsin Branch of AAUW, the American Association of University Women.

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Judy Goodnight

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Membership Outreach

Member Outreach is a way for our AAUW community to stay connected and reach out to members during significant times in their lives.

AAUW member, Laurie Leonard creates beautiful cards for occasions such as:

- * Thinking of you
- * Congratulations
- * Get Well
- * Illness



If you know of a member who we should reach out to in this way, please contact JaneAnne McCabe. E-mail: jamforever02@yahoo.com, Text: 920-382-0031

Michael Goodnight and Associates, LLC



Michael L. Goodnight & Judy Goodnight

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**WOMEN'S
ACTION
COALITION**

OF THE FOX VALLEY

ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY

Audio, Video, Photo, & Slide Converting to Digital Files — PC Computer Support