



The Apple Branch

American Association of University Women
Appleton, Wisconsin



Serving the Greater Fox Cities Area

Volume 40 Number 5 January 2026



**APPLETON (WI)
BRANCH**

What's Happening This Month...

JANUARY 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--|---|-----|-----|
| | | | | 1 New Year's Day | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 Second Choice Books | 7 | 8 Zoom Art Class | 9 | 10 |
| 11 New/ Prospective Member Gathering | 12 | 13 Zoom Branch Program & Meeting | 14 | 15 Thursday Afternoon <u>Literature</u> Newsletter Articles Due | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 Martin Luther King Jr Day | 20 | 21 Wednesday Afternoon Literature | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 AAUW Reads In person | 27 AAUW Reads Zoom Holocaust Remembrance Day | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

President's Page

Hello Friends,

A new year! New ideas, new attempts, new relationships... the list of "improvements" is lengthy, isn't it? January is named for the Roman god Janus who faced forward and backwards, which seems appropriate for the new year. Mindful of the past we move into the future.

So what does that look like for you? Are you full of resolution, or sticking with the status quo? Challenging or coddling yourself? I imagine you're like I am, somewhere in the middle.

My husband remarked recently that I have been moaning about my extra pounds and minimal minutes of exercise for as long as he's known me. He was urging me to be kinder to myself, and focus on something more productive I guess, but I didn't enjoy the sting of truth. I don't believe I thanked him for his observation, accurate or not.

AAUW is leading us to think about what we want in the new year. How can we stand up for our values not only as advocates for women but as loyal Americans? Can we help shape public opinion when we realize laws we worked years to achieve such as Title IX are diminished or ignored? Do we support schools that are facing challenges to books, to curriculum, to basic rights? Do we permit the infusion of Christianity in public schools?

It's not easy to face the reality of many changes our federal government has enacted. It's not comfortable, and sometimes we feel it's a useless task anyway. But AAUW leadership at the national and state levels has suggestions and direction that can help us feel true to our beliefs and purposeful in our actions. Becky O'Connor and the Public Policy committee will guide us using the wisdom from our leadership with their knowledge of our branch. We will work in coalition with other groups of similar conviction. There is a path, and we won't walk it alone.

I seem to find so many other things to do than exercise. I love to cook, bake, and eat. A good book can keep me from many less pleasant tasks. But even I cannot ignore the call of conscience these times demand. I will write and call my representatives. I will join with others to rally for justice and democracy. I will engage others in conversation about what we stand for with the belief that respectful discourse can build bridges. We each need to find a way to help bring positive change.

"We" is such an important word. With it there can be power and wisdom greater than "I" ever achieves. As we move to the new year, I am grateful that we are in this together. I can't think of a better group to be a part of. I face the new year confident because of what we accomplished in the past year. My Janus faces are both smiling. Let's be proud of what we do and who we are in 2026!

Faye Binsfeld, President



AAUW Appleton Program News

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 out January 10th)



**Topic: Welcome to the Struggle and Finding a Space!
With Educator and Consultant Amanda Florence Garcia
Goodenough**

Amanda Florence Garcia Goodenough (she/her) is a dedicated educator operating from a cultural humility framework to center and elevate historically marginalized voices, promote belonging, disrupt structural inequities and advance intersectional social and racial justice.

Amanda engages in systems -change work and strives to speak truth to power as an act of love and liberation. She is a practitioner leaning on 20 years of professional experience in justice, equity, decolonization and interconnectedness (JEDI) efforts. She also relies on decades of critically examined lived experience as a Black and Mexican multiracial woman.

Some memorable statements from her keynote at the AAUW State Convention in April 2025 include:

Through Struggle there can be Joy

Words are How We Build Vision

We Cannot Heal until We Confront Harm

Find a Space for Being Bold Together

Hope you can Join the ZOOM meeting and get inspired.

NOTE: The Zoom meeting will be open at 6:15 pm and you'll be admitted to the waiting room. Try to be there between 6:15 and 6:25 pm for the program beginning promptly at 6:30 pm. As a courtesy to our speaker & other branch members, please be on time. If you are joining late, turn off your computer sound until you are in the meeting and ready to listen. Thanks everyone! Hope you can attend!

Lisa Balster, Program VP & Shirley Collins, Assistant Program VP

AAUW Appleton Membership News

Our Winter Gathering for New and Prospective Members is coming up on January 11th! All branch members are welcome to attend if you would like to bring a prospective member with you. We look forward to seeing many of you there! Be sure to RSVP!

Kathy O'Connor-Membership VP



AAUW Appleton Public Policy Update

AAUW-Appleton was invited to participate in the League of Women Voters of Appleton-Fox Cities initial convening of 22 area organizations to get to know each other's groups a bit better and begin to explore areas of potential collaboration. It was uplifting for Faye Binsfeld and me to share what is important to AAUW as well as hear about the dedicated work done by so many others in our community. Challenges we are all facing and initial ideas for potential collaborations were also discussed. AAUW National has clearly stated that collaboration with other groups is important. *"The partnership (with LWV) underscores a shared belief that when women lead, democracy grows stronger. By aligning missions and mobilizing across states and communities, these organizations are demonstrating the power of collaboration in advancing equity, inclusion, and civic participation."* This gathering, made up of representatives from so many groups such as NOW, ES-OTHER, Fair Maps Coalition, Labor Council, Wild Ones, Citizens Climate Lobby and more, was just a start. Our megaphone reaches even more people when we work together. What makes this even more timely, is that AAUW-WI Public Policy recently alerted us to a webinar from national: **Working in Coalition: Building Power Through Partnerships**. (You can find it... search webinars on the AAUW site... and watch it when you are recovering from holiday exhaustion.)

Our branch continues to be **active and engaged!** We wrote postcards supporting the **WI ERA bill** after hearing Penny Bernard Shaber at our November branch meeting! Her encouragement to build relationships with our legislators will be our inspiration for the year. If you did not have a chance to send a postcard...here are some samples of possible texts.

Stay warm and stay informed!

Becky O'Connor, AAUW-Appleton Public Policy Chair

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by this state or by any political subdivision of the state on account of sex, gender identity, race, color, sexual orientation, disability, religion, national origin, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, or any other immutable characteristic."

I am writing in support of the Wisconsin Equal Rights Amendment bill. This bill goes beyond sex. It includes a long list of other factors, but for me it starts with women. It starts with eliminating discrimination on the basis of sex.

I am asking you to support the Wisconsin Equal Rights Amendment bill. Twenty-nine states already have some type of equal rights amendment in their state constitutions and it is time for Wisconsin to also support the ERA.

You can reach your legislator 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

The Unintended Consequence for Women Pursuing Advanced Education

The recent conversation around the definition of what is a “professional degree” has focused on what it will mean for students. What has been missing from those conversations is its impact on women.

The current discussion relates to proposed changes to student loan caps. The current caps go back to the 1965 federal law that defines a professional degree and lists 10 degrees considered professional and indicates the list is not exhaustive.

The above article recently appeared in a mailing by the Women’s Fund of the Fox Valley, Inc, one of the fellow members of our Women’s Action Coalition of the Fox Valley. We often mention in our AAUW meetings and information to new members that AAUW at the national level conducts research whose results are provided to law makers and policy makers. Other organizations advocating for women also rely on AAUW research reports such as the article referenced above.

Here’s the link to the article for you to read for yourself:

[Unintended Consequence for Women Pursuing Advanced Education](#)

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATES

Email Address Update:

Nancy Graham has a new email address.

Mark this change in your directory:

ngrahamapp@icloud.com

Changes of address/phone number/email address? Report any changes to Judy Goodnight and Jane Doughty ASAP to ensure that your branch records stay up-to-date. Make sure you update your information in the national database as well.

February newsletter articles will be due January 15th.

Send articles to Judy Goodnight at judy@gwd.org.



Thank you so very much!

Our “Return to Winter Wonderland” Brunch & Fundraiser was another big success! Sixty-six members and twenty-nine guests enjoyed a wonderful brunch at Bridgewood. The addition of cherry French toast to the buffet was well received!

Thank you to those who shared their time and talents to help plan, organize, wrap, and set up the brunch. The numbers say it all:

- * 8 members served as a focus group to finalize brunch activities.
- * 7 members helped finish the silent auction baskets and prepare the bag raffle items, tickets, and bags.
- * 27 members carried out brunch tasks on Saturday morning; 4 of those are relatively new members.

There were more silent auction and bag raffle items than last year. Thank you to all who so generously donated! Thank you to the generous bidders too! The addition of the 50/50 card raffle generated a lot of enthusiasm and added some extra dollars to our profit as well.

Together, you **all** helped us make a profit and an increase from last year. That profit will be divided into:

- * The branch “General Fund” to help us maintain our budget
- * The branch “Leadership Development Fund”

Jeanne Seitz & Sue Taylor



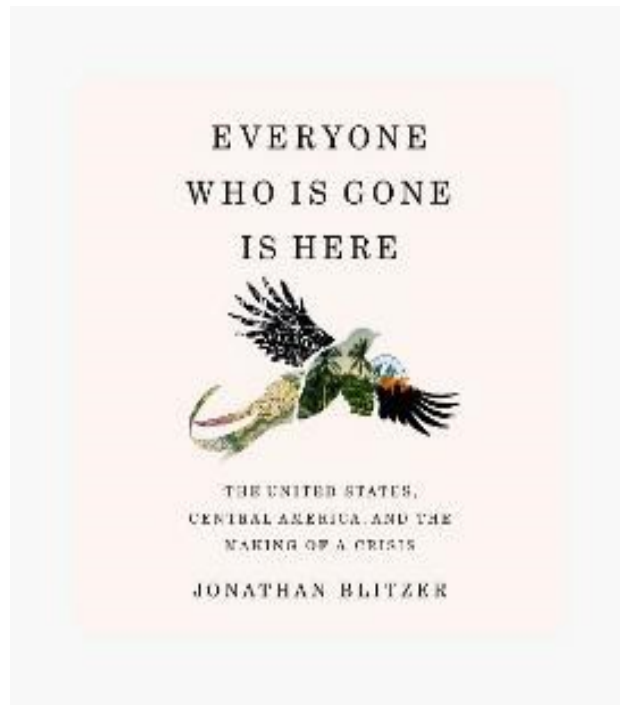
2026 AAUW Appleton Branch Scholarships

Our 2025 Book Sale was our best ever and we are now looking forward to awarding scholarships to qualified applicants. Applications are now open. Follow the link below to our website to view the eligibility requirements and download the application. Applications are due by April 15.

<https://appleton-wi.aauw.net/scholarships/>

If you know a woman who will be a Junior or Senior in college or a graduate student and graduated from a Fox Valley area high school (or lived in the valley for at least 10 years), please encourage her to apply. If you have questions, please contact Mary Grace at 920-915-6379 or mcggs@aol.com.

AAUW Reads



**Our book study is off to a great start! Is it light reading or easy? Nope!
But we are engaged in a very current issue and had great discussions already!**

**Please join even if you are just starting the book and/or are curious about AAUW Reads!
You will be very welcome!**

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)

Zoom link will be emailed to all who RSVP to Judy so don't forget to do so!

For the January discussions we will read [Part 2, Chapters 19-31](#)

SECOND CHOICE BOOKS

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

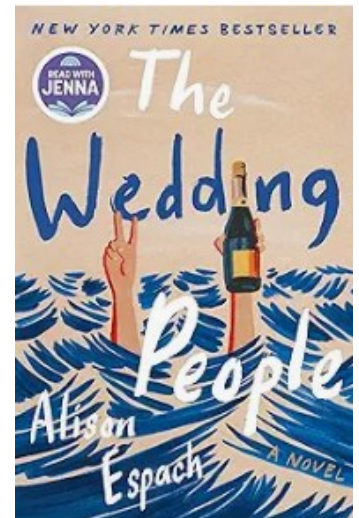
We'll meet on **January 6th at 1:00 pm.**

RSVP to Judy Goodnight at judy@gwd.org or 920.729.9553 by **January 3rd** to get the location.

RSVPs are a must when we meet at restaurants!

Our February book is *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon.

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



AFTERNOON LITERATURE

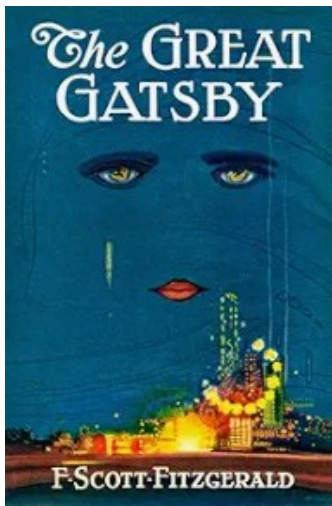
Our January book is *The Great Gatsby*
Author: F. Scott Fitzgerald

Thursday group meets January 15th at Cheryl Reissmann's.
Karen Gosse is the discussion leader

Wednesday group meets January 21st at Copper Rock North,
1835 E. Edgewood Dr., host Faye Binsfeld
Faye will also be the discussion leader.

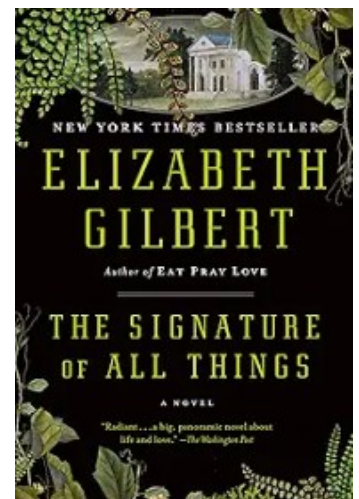
Kindly RSVP to the hosts in a timely manner.

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

We are on hiatus until March 12, 2026, since we take January and February off. That should give everyone plenty of time to read our March book— *The Signature of All Things* by Elizabeth Gilbert.





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

Mark Your New 2026 Calendar!!

Lots of great speakers, opportunities to learn more about the AAUW mission, and an opportunity to hear what other branches are up to!



AAUW January Art Class by Zoom

When: Thursday, January 8

Time: 12:30 pm (Central Time)

Media: Acrylic Painting - Glittery Winter Tree

This class will be using acrylic paint to create a beautiful glittery Winter Landscape.

Materials needed:

Acrylic paint
Glazing or gloss medium
11"x 14" Stretched Canvas
Brushes of various sizes- round and flat
1" blending brush
Water container
Paper Towels
White or clear glitter
Pencil and eraser
Light color chalk
Hair Dryer



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

Minutes of the AAUW Appleton Branch Meeting
December 6, 2025
Bridgewood Conference Center

The meeting was called to order by President Faye Binsfeld at 10:45 AM. following a delicious meal and the opening of our annual holiday fundraiser.

Mary Grace thanked everyone for their outstanding efforts to make our fall used book sale a success and reminded everyone that scholarship applications to award the funds raised through the sale are now available. They need to be received by April 15, 2026.

Jeanne Seitz and Sue Taylor were recognized for the wonderful job they did organizing the fundraiser and asked for new committee chairs to continue the job next year.

Lisa Balster, Program Vice-President, reminded us the January and February meetings will be ZOOM meetings and advised all to watch for online information on upcoming events. The March meeting location needs to be changed due to the closing of the restaurant listed.

Kathy O'Connor invited prospective members and new members to an informal January gathering.

Faye reminded everyone to follow newsletter announcements of upcoming events for the branch and all interest groups.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Respectively submitted,
Connie Polley, Secretary



AAUW Appleton's 2025 Book Sale

Income: \$67,460.00

Expenses: \$ 7,678.27

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| Printing | \$ 533.89 |
| Insurance | \$ 869.00 |
| Rent | \$3000.00 |
| Tables | \$2953.00 |
| Miscellaneous | \$ 322.38 |

Income minus Expenses for 2025 Book Sale \$59,781.73

35% for Nationals Greatest Needs \$20,923.61

65% for Local Scholarships \$38,858.12

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN - APPLETON BRANCH
TREASURER'S REPORT
November 30, 2025

AAUW Appleton Branch Net Assets

North Shore Bank, General Checking #1472

General Fund \$ 32,398.07

Scholarship Fund - Money Market #1907

\$ 73,748.56

TOTAL Assets \$ 106,146.63

Less bills due \$ -

NET ASSETS

\$ 106,146.63

Year To Date Operating Statement Checking

| | Current Month | Actual to Date | 2025/2026 | Variance |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| General Revenues | | | | |
| Branch Dues | | \$ 505.00 | \$ 2,025.00 | \$ 1,520.00 |
| December Raffle | \$ - | | \$ 1,229.00 | \$ 1,229.00 |
| Interest | \$ 0.39 | \$ 0.94 | \$ 24.00 | \$ 23.06 |
| Advertisement | | \$ 50.00 | \$ 50.00 | \$ - |
| Total Revenue | \$ 45.39 | \$ 555.94 | \$ 3,328.00 | \$ 2,772.06 |
| General Expenses | | | | |
| Membership/Recruiting | \$ 16.22 | \$ 87.96 | \$ 400.00 | \$ 312.04 |
| Financial Aid | \$ - | 0 | \$ 154.00 | \$ 154.00 |
| Newsletter | \$ - | 0 | \$ - | \$ - |
| Programs | \$ - | \$ 475.00 | \$ 800.00 | \$ 325.00 |
| Yearbook | \$ - | \$ 397.46 | \$ 400.00 | \$ 2.54 |
| Insurance (Split with Book Sale) | \$ - | \$ 869.00 | \$ 400.00 | \$ (469.00) |
| Public Policy | \$ - | 0 | \$ 100.00 | \$ 100.00 |
| Historian's Expenses | \$ - | 0 | \$ 50.00 | \$ 50.00 |
| President's Expenses | \$ - | 0 | \$ 100.00 | \$ 100.00 |
| Finance Expenses | \$ - | 86.91 | \$ 150.00 | \$ 63.09 |
| General Expenses | \$ - | 50 | \$ 100.00 | \$ 50.00 |
| Woman's Action Coalition | \$ - | 0 | \$ 200.00 | \$ 200.00 |
| Brunch | \$ - | 0 | \$ 100.00 | \$ 100.00 |
| Special Event | \$ - | 0 | \$ 300.00 | \$ 300.00 |
| Diversity (new) | \$ - | 0 | \$ 50.00 | \$ 50.00 |
| Total Expense | \$ 16.22 | \$ 1,966.33 | \$ 3,304.00 | \$ 1,337.67 |

***\$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

Choice

Lynn Ungar

There isn't a right answer.
There just isn't. the game show
where the bells ring and the points
go up and the confetti falls
because you got the answer
is a lie. The preacher who would assure you
of how to attain salvation
is making it all up. The doctor
who knows just how to fix
what ails you will be sure
of something else tomorrow.
Every choice will
wound someone, heal someone,
build a wall and open a conversation.
Things will always happen
that you can't foresee.
But you have to choose.
It's all we have-that little rudder
that we employ in the midst
of all the eddies and rapids,
the current that pulls us
inexorably toward the sea.
The fact that you are swept along
by the river is no excuse.
Watch where you are going.
Lean in toward what you love.
When in doubt, tell the truth.

The rage you are feeling
comes from the same place
inside your heart as the love.

This is why you refuse to accept
a world where cruelty reigns
and the fire consumes all.

You have known hope
and joy and kindness
like you have known water.

And justice is a river
that demands
you do not give up on it.

-Nikita Gill



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.

Branch President:

Faye Binsfeld

binsfeldfaye@gmail.com

920-268-8246

Membership VP:

Kathy O'Connor

kocpsy@gmail.com

920-205-0983

Newsletter Editor:

Judy Goodnight

judy@gwd.org

920-729-9553

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

Owner

1406 Fieldstone Court
Neenah, WI 54956
Phone: 920.215.0014
E-mail: Mike@michaelgoodnight.com

**WOMEN'S
ACTION
COALITION**

OF THE FOX VALLEY

ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY

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