



The Apple Branch

American Association of University Women
Appleton, Wisconsin

Serving the Greater Fox Cities Area

Volume 40 Number 6 February 2026



What's Happening This Month...

FEBRUARY 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3 Board/ Budget Meeting	4 Second Choice Books	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 Zoom Branch Program & Meeting	13	14 
15 <u>T-Shirt Orders Due</u> Newsletter Articles Due	16	17 Primary Election Day	18 Wednesday Afternoon Literature	19 Thursday Afternoon Literature	20	21
22	23 AAUW Reads In person	24 AAUW Reads via Zoom	25	26	27	28
MARCH 1	2	3 Second Choice Books	4	5	6	7

President's Page

Hello Friends,

I love seeing former students, now adults rather than the 6 and 7 year olds I enjoyed greatly. Some are lawyers, doctors, leaders; others are hard working laborers, and one special guy bags my groceries.

Levi is pretty slow at his work, but he stays focused and asks about how I want things bagged, taking pride in his work. He works during the slower times, but I think he is a valued employee who has a long work history with the store. He's proud of himself.

Levi began the path to work with laws and schools that saw his value and sought to maximize his abilities. There were work programs while he was in high school, preparing him for adulthood. We taxpayers support those programs because we know that when all are respected, all benefit.

Stories like Levi's demonstrate our country at its finest if you ask me, and AAUW agrees. Although our primary focus is advancing women and girls, we also support full access to civil and constitutional rights for all people. We join with many organizations when we take action. I recently read a letter to congressional leaders challenging proposed healthcare cuts (that would greatly impact Levi) and it was signed by 355 organizations, including AAUW. Signees represented the physically disabled, those with autism, the aging population, medical and educational groups. I'm proud that AAUW joined them.

Here in Appleton, we work in coalition when there is a need for many voices. Our Women's Action Coalition has been cautious about working with the new National Organization for Women- Appleton chapter. We worried about partisan activity that NOW conducts at a national level because we are nonpartisan. Happily, in AAUW, we have learned that working together on nonpartisan actions which focus on our issues is not only allowed, it is being modeled at the national level. Our local coalition is meeting to consider inviting NOW to join us. I'll keep you informed. I welcome your input as we consider this invitation.

When my students learned to work and play with children of all abilities and backgrounds, their own education was improved. Working with diverse groups in our community can improve outcomes and improve us. I'm eager to learn from other advocates for women's success as we work to achieve equity and opportunity for all. I hope our welcome is extended to collaborate with other women-forward groups so we can meet the many challenges we face.

In Sisterhood,

Faye Binsfeld, President



February Branch Program & Meeting

Date: Thursday, February 12, 2026

Time: 6:30 p.m. for Program, 7:30 p.m. Meeting
Via Zoom

Topic: Multicultural Coalition Inc. Program and Insights with Lisa Cruz



Join Lisa Cruz as she provides a personal journey and experience as the Executive Director and a founder of Multicultural Coalition, Inc. (MCI), a non-profit welcoming all community members in a three county region. Born out of the pandemic, the MCI is action-oriented, grassroots driven and built on trusted relationships.

-
is

Centered on humanitarianism and redefining what it means to serve others; MCI provides a barrier-free support system and belongs to more than 550 families today. Cruz will provide a multifaceted look at the challenges many families are facing today as well as the clarity and hope that provide grounding to the work at hand.

NOTE: Watch your email for the Zoom link. It will be sent to you a few days before the scheduled meeting.

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

- * We welcome our newest member, Debi Schnell, to the Appleton Branch. Debi is a retired school counselor. She joined AAUW soon after winning several auction items at the Winter Brunch. We look forward to getting to know her and including her in other branch activities.
- * As we consider our friends and colleagues who may be interested in joining our branch, we can use a variety of "elevator pitches" to explain AAUW. These include statements such as:
 - AAUW empowers women and girls by championing their success in higher education and promoting policy solutions that create lasting change.
 - AAUW fights for gender equity in higher education and beyond.
 - AAUW members work collectively to defend and promote access, equity and opportunity for all women and girls.

- * Nineteen lovely women attended the Winter Gathering, including two prospective members and six who have recently joined. It was an afternoon filled with interesting conversation, idea sharing, connection-making and laughter. Thanks to all of those who were able to attend. (See attached photo.)

Kathy O'Connor-Membership VP



AAUW NATIONAL NEWS

AAUW's Winter Member Gathering

Wednesday, February 18, 4:30 p.m. ET

Please join us for AAUW's Winter Member Gathering. At this special event, we will:

- Recognize outstanding supporters and branches,
- Update you on the impact of our Strategic Plan's 3 key priorities, and
- Provide you with the information you need to answer our 5 Calls to Action!

[Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate our achievements and learn about our shared impact! Register here.](#)

Calling All AAUW Artists!

We are thrilled to announce the opening of the 2026 AAUW Annual Art Contest! This is your opportunity to showcase your artistic talents and have your work featured in our annual notecard collection, distributed to members nationwide. Sign-up is easy and only requires your email address or AAUW member ID! [Entries are open now through January 30, 2026 on the AAUW Art Contest page.](#)

Virtual Economic Empowerment Trainings

AAUW's virtual webinar series offers expert-led training in salary negotiation, financial literacy, and career development to help women advance professionally and economically.

[Explore our upcoming webinars today!](#)

Take a Stand

An advisory committee led by the U.S. Department of Education is considering different borrowing limits for "graduate" vs. "professional" degrees. This change may deter women from pursuing advanced degrees, especially since women more often rely on student loans. You'll have the opportunity to weigh in with a public comment — [sign up for AAUW Action Network alerts to stay up to date.](#)

Dues Update

Reminder: The AAUW Board of Directors voted to increase national dues last February 2025. Beginning April 1, 2026, national member dues will increase \$2 to \$76.

[Learn more here.](#)

AAUW Appleton Public Policy Update

AAUW Appleton Public Policy Update

A new year brings new challenges, new ideas, and new opportunities to be an **active** branch!

AAUW-National, in the Principles & Priorities 2025-2027 states our positions and our dedication to stand for **EDUCATION, ECONOMIC SECURITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL RIGHTS**. You can check out aauw.org to see more about each of these.

Our branch, as well as AAUW-WI has taken many actions in support of public education. Checking out the **Wisconsin Public Education Network** (WPEN) is a good way to follow current issues. Calling and writing your representatives can show your support as well. From the WPEN: "Wisconsin lawmakers have once again failed to meet the needs of kids and public schools in state budget deal, despite remarkable advocacy efforts and an unprecedented alignment of the education community to demand increases to revenue limits, spendable aid, special education funding, and meeting priority needs."

Four AAUW-Appleton members attended a press conference recently called to highlight possible ways to close the funding gap in public education both in Appleton and statewide. Stay tuned for future details on a planned visit to advocate in person at the **AAUW-WI State Convention in Madison** in April!



Our voices matter! AAUW gives us a megaphone!

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

Becky O'Connor, AAUW-Appleton Public Policy Chair

IMPORTANT VOTER INFORMATION!

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2026 Spring Primary (if necessary)

TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026 Spring Election

Remember that your mailed ballot won't get there in a day or two. And your ballot might not be post marked on the day you bring it to the Post Office. So plan ahead and vote early! And check with your clerk...you might have to request the ballots every year!

Here are two links with answers to your VOTING QUESTIONS!

<https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/voter-information>

<https://www.vote411.org/>

Becky O'Connor

AAUW-Appleton Public Policy chair

Voter Registration Assistance Opportunities!

There will be a Zoom training/refresher to learn how to assist people with voter registration. We have had a GREAT response from our AAUW members in the past to be part of this, and it is a GREAT way to be out in the community representing our GREAT organization! The training will be on **Thursday, February 26**. It will likely be at 6:30, but you will get a follow up with details. Attending does not mean you must volunteer, but it will give you a good understanding of what it is all about.

If you are interested, email Jacqui Klimaszewski jjklimaszewski542@gmail.com or let me know bandboc@gmail.com

Becky O'Connor

AAUW-Appleton Public Policy chair



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

AAUW APPLETON STRATEGIC PLAN :

The executive board of our branch has completed work on the strategic plan which will guide us for the next 3 years. The plan had input from the entire board under the guidance of our Vice President of Finance, Kathryn Herzog. The final vote to accept the plan will take place at the February board meeting.

Here are the main points and actions:

EDUCATION AND TRAINING :

Offer scholarships, explore connections with local colleges, promote awareness of Equal Pay Days for women, and raise awareness of AAUW's pay equity resources

LEADERSHIP:

Encourage participation in AAUW meetings and events at local and state levels, organize committee job descriptions and timelines, review and maintain bylaws and policies, maintain branch documents on our website

PROGRAM:

Align programs with AAUW mission, work to meet 5 Star Program requirements, promote local and state advocacy activities

BRANCH SUSTAINABILITY:

Align spending with strategic goals, promote financial support for AAUW, retain and recruit diverse membership, work in coalition with other women-forward groups

The plan will be a guide and measurement tool for us to assess our progress. There are check-in dates to ensure we are achieving our goals. Thanks to the board members who contributed their ideas and suggestions to this three year project.

Junior Achievement Biz Town : In a past program, interested AAUW members were encouraged to sign up to volunteer with this program. Here's a report on that volunteer experience by Helene Iverson.

Imagine 100 employees all starting new jobs on the same day...and they're 10 years old! That was my experience as a volunteer helping students from Westwood Elementary School on December 11.

As an AAUW member, I wanted to explore what JA was offering in terms of STEM education. After five 45 minute classroom lessons on supply and demand, team work, managing a checking account, etc. the children arrived ready to go to work at one of the 16 businesses located at BizTown. My team at Bergstrom included a CEO, CFO, marketing manager, leasing agent, a car designer, and a sales manager. I was there to answer questions and help them in their roles.

The 9:30-2:00 day was well thought out, well organized, and gave the "citizens" a chance to experience working in a position, interacting with other businesses, voting, and both shopping /managing their money. I heard some comments like, "Boy, I sure have to sign a lot of papers", "I'm beat. When is my lunch break?" "My Mom says it was a stressful day at work. Now I know what she means" "These products aren't selling. Maybe we need to lower the price"

I came home ready for some quiet (I used to do this every day in fourth grade?) and appreciative that something like this exists as a hands-on activity for students in many school districts. The \$55.00 per student cost for a visit is paid for by business sponsorships, school district payments, and small donations by each student with the JA Development office trying to make up the difference.

As school districts are facing shortfalls in operational budgets, programs like these will suffer. That would be a big loss. Plus JA needs volunteers to go out to classrooms and staff the BizTown visits. I took a turn, how about you?

An overstimulated Helene Iverson

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 Appleton Board Nominations - Chris Taylor



Bambi Minczeski—Assistant Program Vice-President

Bambi is a new member to our branch this year. Kudos for stepping up & getting involved! Bambi wrote: I am a recently retired registered nurse. I worked at ThedaCare for almost 35 yrs, most recently in the IT department, and the only thing I miss is the fantastic team I worked with!

I have 2 sons who are each married to fantastic ladies and I have 2 grandchildren-Marlo and Cosmo.

I love to work in the yard and read mostly fiction.

Super power: humor Vice: Sweets



Kayla Rouse—Membership Vice-President

Kayla Rouse is a nature lover, creator, and connector. As a professional artist, her watercolor and mixed media works encourage appreciation and protection of nature. For over a decade, she built a new sustainable materials business at Kimberly-Clark Corporation. Kayla has served on the Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust board of directors since 2018 and the Outagamie County Greenway Committee since 2019, is a certified Biomimicry Professional with 13 granted patents, and is a recipient of the Fox Cities Future 15 award. She grew up in California and earned a B.S Biological Sciences from UC Davis and an MBA from the University of Notre Dame. See her art at joysurrounding.com or Instagram @joysurrounding

Kayla joined AAUW in search of a book club and a supportive group of women, and looks forward to welcoming more people into our community! Kayla recently began serving as Asst. Membership VP.

AAUW Reads



Our book study is off to a great start! We are engaged in a very current issue and have 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, February 23 at 1:00 at Becky O'Connor's home (RSVP to Becky O'Connor)

Tuesday, February 24 at 6:30 on Zoom (RSVP to Judy Goodnight)

For the February discussions we will read Part 3, Chapters 32-38

NOTICES:

Our branch's financial audit review was completed by member Vicki Huffman, CPA, who reported everything is in order. We review the books every two years in accordance with our by-laws.

A video recording was made of the program portion of the January 2026 branch meeting. If you were unable to attend and wish to watch the presentation, contact Judy Goodnight and she will send you the video link.

It's T-Shirt Time!

Don't miss this opportunity to order your AAUW t-shirt, sweatshirt, or cap. T-shirt is 50/50 cotton/poly blend, navy blue with white lettering (AAUW centered and "because equity is still an issue" below it.)

REMEMBER: As you wear them, they make a great marketing tool. And they look especially great (and recommended) at our Book Sale in October.

Payment must accompany the order form. **Deadline is February 15th.**

AAUW Order Form 2026

Name _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Circle size:

Short sleeve tee- \$11.00. S M L XL Add \$1.00 for 2X 3X 4X

Long sleeve tee- \$16.00 S M L XL Add \$1.00 for 2X 3X 4X

Circle size:

Crewneck Sweatshirt- \$22.00 S M L XL Add \$2.00 for 2X 3X 4X

Hooded Sweatshirt- \$26.00 S M L XL Add \$2.00 for 2X 3X 4X

Caps- \$12.00 No. _____

Make checks payable to: Pat Hauser.

Checks can be sent to: Pat Hauser, 4795 N Tony Ct., Appleton, WI 54913

You can contact Pat at 920-687-1084 or phouser1@new.rr.com

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATES

New Member:

Debi Schnell

N4121 Ironwood Ct. Freedom 54130

540-5515

dschnell@new.rr.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.

March newsletter articles will be due February 15th.

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

SECOND CHOICE BOOKS

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

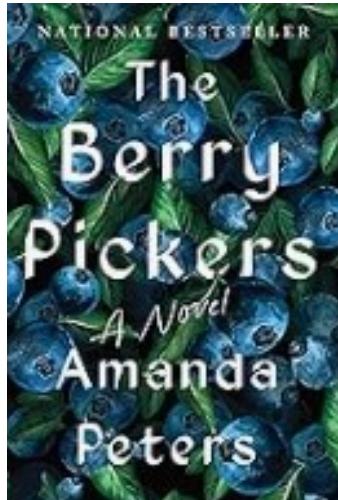
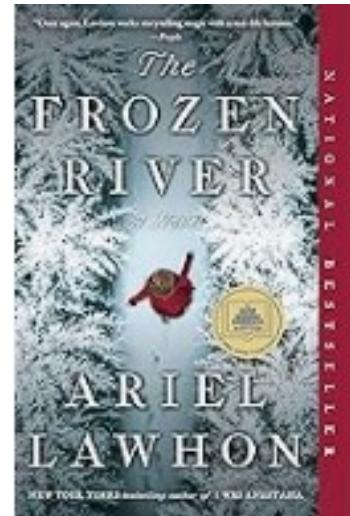
We'll meet on **February 4th at 1:00 pm.**

RSVP to Judy Goodnight at judy@gwd.org or 920.729.9553 by **February 1st** to get the location.

RSVPs are a must when we meet at restaurants!

Our March book is ***Last Bus to Wisdom*** by Ivan Doig.

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



AFTERNOON LITERATURE

Our February book is ***The Berry Pickers***
Author: Amanda Peters

Wednesday, February 18: Host is Pat Hauser, 4795 N. Tony Ct;
Discussion Leader—Rachel Edwards

Thursday, February 19: Host is Nancy Samson, 620 N. Meade St;
Discussion Leader—Sheryl DeHart

Kindly RSVP to the hosts in a timely manner.

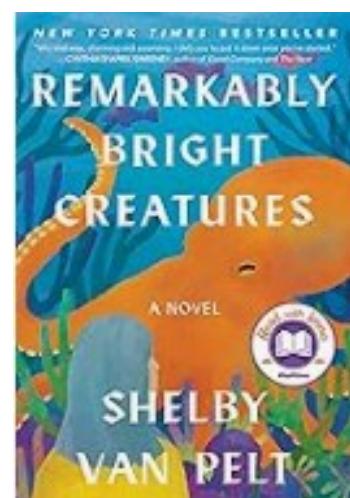
If you are not a current member of this group & are interested in joining, contact Judy Goodnight at judy@gwd.org.

Thursday Evening Book Group

We are on hiatus until March 12, 2026, since we take January and February off. But we've made some changes since learning that Shelby Van Pelt, author of ***Remarkably Bright Creatures***, will be at the Appleton Public Library on that evening to talk about her book as part of the Fox Cities Reads event. Group members are encouraged to attend her presentation that evening.

The book that was scheduled for March will now be our September book.

Note: The April host will be Rachel Edwards instead of Allison Moeschberger. Mark that change on your calendar.



Minutes of January 13, 2026 AAUW Appleton Branch Zoom Meeting

The meeting was called to order by president Faye Binsfeld at 7:30PM following an excellent program presented by Amanda Garcia Goodenough called Welcome to the Struggle and Finding a Space.

Budget:

Faye reported on Finances for Kathryn Herzog. Budget work will begin soon with a review of earnings from the December fundraiser and how they can be used by the branch.

Program:

Lisa Balster reviewed upcoming meetings. The February meeting will also be on zoom. Lisa Cruz, the Executive Director and a founder of Multicultural Coalition, Inc will highlight their program services and insights. Members who wish to contribute to the coalition may do so on the group's website.

Public Policy: Becky O'Connor reminded members to explore aauw.org, our national website to learn more about the organization and its many opportunities to learn and advocate.

Membership: Kathy O'Connor reported one new member has joined. An afternoon gathering was held Sunday, January 11, for new members at Kathy's home. The event was well attended and featured many good conversations and information-sharing.

Nominating: Faye spoke for Chris Taylor to announce that we have a nominee for Assistant Program Vice President for 2026-27, Bambi Minczeski. Kayla Rouse has agreed to begin now as the Assistant Membership Vice President, and then step into Membership VP in the 2026-27 year.

Scholarships: Mary Grace reminded us to promote applications for our scholarships on social media and any way we can.

President's Report: Faye Binsfeld explained that there will be a discussion about adding NOW (National Organization for Women) Appleton to the Women's Action Coalition. A meeting is scheduled so the coalition members can consider the change. There are many aspects to consider, although coalitions are formed for only specific purposes without any further partnership. Faye also put out an appeal to find a new webmaster for our branch's website beginning this summer. Judy Goodnight currently does the work and she will assist any new volunteer. Any member with an interest in this position is welcome to discuss it with Judy or Faye.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Submitted by Faye Binsfeld for Connie Polley

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN - APPLETON BRANCH
TREASURER'S REPORT
December 31, 2025

AAUW Appleton Branch Net Assets

North Shore Bank, General Checking #1472		
General Fund	\$ 36,487.37	
Schloraship Fund - Money Market #1907	\$ 57,757.34	
	\$ 94,244.71	
Less bills due	\$ -	
		\$ 94,244.71
		NET ASSETS

Year To Date Operating Statement Checking

	Current Month	Actual to Date	2025/2026	Variance
General Revenues				
Branch Dues	\$ 105.00	\$ 610.00	\$ 2,025.00	\$ 1,415.00
December Raffle	\$ 6,558.00	\$ 6,558.00	\$ 1,229.00	\$ (5,329.00)
Interest	\$ 0.33	\$ 1.27	\$ 24.00	\$ 22.73
Advertisement		\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ -
Total Revenue	\$ 6,663.33	\$ 7,219.27	\$ 3,328.00	\$ (3,891.27)
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	\$ 2,975.92	\$ 2975.92	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Special Event	\$ -	\$ 0	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Diversity (new)	\$ -	\$ 0	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Total Expense	\$ 2,992.14	\$ 4,942.25	\$ 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

**this includes bridgewood and supplies (91.97) and food charge

Faye's Poetry Corner

Toward the Growing Light Kate Lore

Tonight we pause-
not from fear,
but from trust.

The dark gathers what it has
carried:
grief and seed,
silence and prayer,
the long work of becoming.

This is the turning-
when the sun leans fully into
absence
and is not lost.

Ancient hands knew this hour,
marked it with flame,
with drum and story,
keeping watch
so the light would remember.

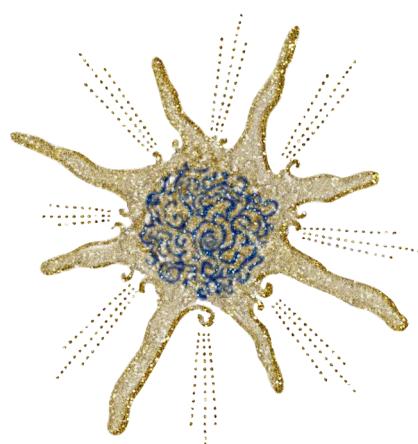
Nothing is required here,
only the courage
to stay with what is unfinished,
to honor the dark

not as threat,
but as teacher.

Beneath frozen ground,
life prepares its return.
Within weary hearts,
hope takes its first breath.

We do not rush the dawn.
We tend what is small and bright-
memory, hope, love-
until the light finds its way back.

And we turn with it,
quietly,
learning once more
to trust
the growing light.



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



1406 Fieldstone Court
Neenah, WI 54956

Phone: 920.215.0014
E-mail: Mike@michaelgoodnight.com

Michael L. Goodnight & Judy Goodnight

Owner

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

WOMEN'S ACTION COALITION

OF THE FOX VALLEY
ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY