

BRANCH BITS AND PIECES

Happy New Year AAUW Members!!

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Special points of interest:

Board Notes

Our Scholarship Recipients

Program Information

Basket Auction Recap

I recently read an article published by *Time* magazine entitled “13 Ways the World Got Better in 2023”. I was surprised by this title. I’ve spent the last year reading news reports about military conflicts, climate change and unsettling politics, so I, like others, was feeling pessimistic about our future. But this article gave me a great deal of hope.

One of my favorite facts from the list is that violent crime in the U.S. has declined 49% since its peak in 1991, including a drop of 2% in the last year.

Another was that talk of energy transition has finally turned into concrete action as developers are building clean-energy infrastructure at an unprecedented rate and scale.

There are also two big reasons why we, as AAUW members, can feel optimistic. First, AAUW recently announced that we have received a four-star rating (97%!) from Charity Navigator. If you are unfamiliar with this organization, they have rated more than 200,000 charities, focusing on cost-effectiveness and overall health of a charity’s programs, including measures of stability, efficiency, and sustainability. This four-star rating is prestigious recognition that means our dollars are well-spent by an organization committed not just to empowering women, but also to fiscal responsibility and organizational effectiveness. We should all feel great about this achievement!

Secondly, I’m thrilled to announce that AAUW will have an important national vote coming up this spring, seeking to remove the 2- or 4-year degree requirement for AAUW membership. I know this has been an issue for many of our members for some time. I can’t tell you how to vote, but I encourage you to talk about this issue with your AAUW sisters and to be sure to watch your mailbox for future voting instructions.

May your 2024 be filled with health and happiness, *Bobbi*

AAUW Annual Brunch

Saturday, May 18, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

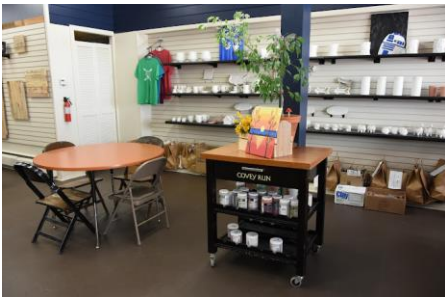
First Lutheran Church, 311 West Mackie

Members whose last names begin with A through M should bring a dish to pass.

PROGRAMS TO START THE YEAR

Open Studio Night

Our first program of the year will be January 17 at Art on the Town Studio, 127 Front Street. Join fellow members in creating an art project or continuing a current art project—painting, sculpting, whatever creative venture you may want to participate in. There may be some cost involved (\$15 or more) depending on the art project you want to do. Or bring in your own project. Please join us at 6:30 p.m. for some fun and refreshments.



Immigration Issues

On February 21 we will be meeting at Beaver Dam High School for a discussion about various issues related to immigration. Betsy Ramsdale, the Bilingual Family Liaison for the school district, will lead the discussion. Please join us at 6:30 p.m. This program will be available via Zoom.

More About Pave

Emily Schier, Executive Director of PAVE, will be the featured speaker at our March 13th meeting. PAVE is an acronym for Protect, Advocate, Validate and Educate. They support a

wide array of services and programs for people of all ages, regardless of race, color, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity (or expression), religion, disability and national origin. They offer a shelter, a 24/7 hotline and texting line. In addition, advocacy training, education and counseling is available through them. They recently moved into a renovated building at 111 East Burnett Street. And this is where we will be meeting at 6:30 p.m. Just a reminder that this meeting will be a week earlier than our usual 3rd Wednesday meeting.

Dance the Night Away

Well, we won't be dancing the night away, but we will be learning more about ballroom dancing from fellow member, Andrea Utrie. Andrea has been doing ballroom dancing for a number of years with her husband, Dave. She will be explaining the "sport" and demonstrate some of the dance moves. Put on your dancing shoes and join us on April 17 at 6:30. At this point we do not have a location nailed down, but stay tuned to your email messages for that information.



D.E.I. Committee Updates

The AAUW DEI committee is starting the year with a new dimension. As a follow-up to the responses we received after the Pardeep Kaleka program last fall, twenty-three people who attended indicated an interest in supporting further community efforts. Six of those people attended our November meeting. Since this inclusion is a very productive way to address AAUW's DEI mission, we will continue to invite such community representatives to be engaged in future plans and programs. At the same time, there are some retirements and additions to our AAUW committee. After giving two years of their time and talents to the committee's work, Ellen Sushak, Betsy Ramsdale, and Margaret Furdek have decided they need a well-deserved break. Thank you, retirees, for your exceptional commitment! At present, Robin Hanson will join the committee with Andrea Utrie, Anita Streich and Annette Kamps. We are also recruiting. We encourage all of our AAUW members to help facilitate the DEI efforts. Please let us know if you would like to be a member, assist in any way, or offer suggestions.

In general, we welcome your ideas about how we can continue to serve this critical mission of the national AAUW organization. Currently, one important way that our larger organization is supporting the DEI mission is through its book club discussions. Both groups have specific relevant books on their lists, but they also identify DEI issues that can be addressed within any discussion.

With appreciation to all,

Annette Kamps, AAUW/DEI Chair

BASKET AUCTION SUMMARY

The 2023 scholarship basket auction was a huge success, with 32 members and 45 guests enjoying the night. The grand total was \$6,815.33 after expenses. The breakdown was \$2,990 from 38 live auction baskets, \$834 from 19 silent auction baskets, \$2,900 from donations, and \$139 from the book sale. This year's auction brought in the most money since 2006 when we started keeping track of the numbers. Much appreciation to Bright Futures who helped in hauling things in for the auction.

Income:

Dinner	2660
Live Auction	2990
Donations	2900
Silent Auction	834
Books	139
	9523

Expenses included 325.00; 35.11; and 2347.56; for a net income of \$6815.33.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Our current balance in each as of 12/31/2023:

Checking Account: \$7,639.66

Savings Account: \$1,708.83

MORAINES PARK AAUW SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

We have awarded two \$1000 scholarships to students who are returning to school. Sydnie Baetz is working in the mental health field part-time and going to school full-time for nursing. Tanya Schmidt is a single mother of three. She is working part time caring for the elderly and going to school ¾ time for nursing. Congratulations!!

BOARD MEETING NOTES

The Beaver Dam branch of AAUW met on Thursday, December 16th, at Our House 2 at 9:00 a.m. Here are some highlights from that meeting:

- 2024 programs were detailed. We are still looking for a place to hold the April program. We are also looking for some entertainment for the annual brunch. Crystal Boling has retired from setting up the brunch and it will be helpful to find someone to take her place.
- The Basket Auction was a success and will allow us to give out two high school scholarships (\$2000 each) and two Moraine Park scholarships for returning students (\$1000 each).
- Because we have added new members, we also have a few free memberships to give out. Bobbi is going to look into the details of this and will ask for possible people to offer this to.
- We talked about the possibility of increasing our dues.
- We discussed about offering various interest groups to our membership. The games interest group did not have much attendance.

SPOTLIGHT ON WISCONSIN

AAUW

American Association of University Women

Beaver Dam Branch

Check us out on our web page:

beaverdam-wi.aauw.net

Issue of School Vouchers

On Wednesday, December 13, the Wisconsin Supreme Court rejected hearing a lawsuit seeking to end the school voucher program. The lawsuit will be filed in a lower court and can still make its way to the Wisconsin Supreme Court through the appeals process.

Read articles on this topic here: [Wisconsin Supreme Court refuses to hear lawsuit challenging voucher school program | Wisconsin Public Radio \(wpr.org\)](#)

[Wisconsin Supreme Court refuses to hear lawsuit challenging voucher school program \(msn.com\)](#)

Election of New Justice in 2025

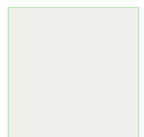
The 2025 Wisconsin Supreme Court election is scheduled for Tuesday, April 1, 2025, to elect a justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court for a ten-year term. Incumbent justice Ann Walsh Bradley has indicated she will seek a fourth ten-year term. If more than two candidates file to run for this seat, a nonpartisan primary election will be held

February 18, 2025, with the top two vote-getters advancing to the April 1 general election. The filing deadline to appear on the ballot in the 2025 election is January 1, 2025.

As of December 1, 2023, former Attorney General Brad Schimel is running against incumbent Justice Ann Walsh Bradley in the April 2025 election. Other conservatives are also considering entering the race.

Read about the election here: [Brad Schimel campaign signals hot 2025 Wisconsin Supreme Court race |Government | captimes.com](#)

MARY KAHLER
209 BEAVER STREET
BEAVER DAM, WI 53916



RECIPIENT NAME
STREET ADDRESS
ADDRESS 2
CITY, ST ZIP CODE