



PIECES AND BITS

American Association of University Women

Beaver Dam, WI Branch

October 2025

President's Message—Andrea Utrie

"This is the best community event I have ever attended," stated Consuelo Lopez, District 1 AAUW president. I have heard so much positive feedback from people in this area regarding the Noltner residency. There are many AAUW members who helped, and community organizations and schools who partnered with us.

Sincere appreciation goes to Annette Kamps for her enthusiasm and organizational skills. Once again, she was the director of this production just as she has been for so many endeavors over the years. Supporting cast included Robin Hanson, Carmen Hanson, Anita Streich, Roberta Marck, Dee Disch, Cindy Noe, Jan Sutter, Diane Kitchen, Teresa Haack, and Marilyn Thomas. So many other members also helped by providing names of diverse individuals for the portraits. I enjoyed working with each of you! We had an excellent presence from our members at the final event. It took a village!!

Well AAUW doesn't let any "grass grow under our feet" as we approach our next big event! The October 15 basket auction at Beaver Dam Country Club is rapidly approaching and I encourage immediate reservations go to Diane Kitchen. Not only do we hope for great member participation, we hope you will reach out to current and new friends to join us for fun and meaningful efforts to support our young people with continuing their education. We currently have 72 people attending. Cindy Noe and I will be at a table with a couple nonmembers and newer members. There are still two spots at our table if anyone cares to join us. We all BELONG!

Diane Kitchen sent me the list of past scholarship recipients. I was surprised to find the names of many friends and two cousins who are on the list! What an impact your generous contributions have had on this community, state, country, and world! You can continue this AAUW tradition by donating a basket, contributing money, or buying books! Again, thanks to all who help with this event especially chair, Diane Kitchen.

As our fantastic programming and book discussions continue, I'm reminded of the phrase, "There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish."—Michelle Obama

And finally,

"As women achieve power, the barriers will fall. As society sees what women can do, as women see what women can do, there will be more women out there doing things, and we'll all be better off for it." — Sandra Day O'Connor

We continue to build on the successes of the past! You are truly a joy in my life.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES ARE AVAILABLE. They will be at the auction and also Book Club groups in October.



If you were at the May Brunch earlier this year, you may have remembered watching Murph, the police dog, as he found items in the room that were hidden by his trainer. Well, an unnamed donor supplied the money to buy Murph his very own vest. This may or may not be him and his new vest but you get the picture (haha).

Learn Something New—A.I.

Our November 19th meeting will be a partnership between AAUW and The Watermark. Dave Schroeder from the University of WI—Madison will be introducing us to Artificial Intelligence (A.I.). We've all heard of it but how many of us actually know much about it and how it affects our lives and how we might be able to use it. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. and will be at The Watermark. Invite your friends, neighbors, relatives, etc. This program is open to the public.



Birthdays are the universe's way of telling us to eat more cake!!

Happy Birthday to

Diana Schneider—October 6

Bobbi Marck—October 11

Kathy McMichael—October 24

Heidi Jones-Freeby—October 27

Diane Kitchen—October 29

The Morning Book Club will be Tuesday, October 14 at 9:30 a.m. to God of the Woods by Liz Moore. This thriller is also the 2024 winner for and Thriller books by Goodreads. wonderful book to read during the Halloween. And if you want to get a head start—next month's book is Fahrenheit 451.



meeting on
discuss The
mystery
Mystery
What a
month of

No Two Persons by Erica Bauermeister is the book of conversation for the Evening Book Club when they meet at Denise Roedl's home (305 Starkweather Drive) on October 27 at 7:00 p.m. I think all members of book clubs can relate how books have changed their lives; this book is about that sensation. Next month's book is Looking for Jane, if you want to get ahead.

Upcoming Basket Auction

By now, I'm sure you are aware of the upcoming Scholarship Gift Basket Auction on Wednesday, October 15. Just a reminder that the doors open at 5:00, dinner is at 6:00 and the auction begins shortly afterward. And one more reminder that the location is not the same as in past years. This year it is at the Beaver Dam Country Club.

If you missed the October 1 deadline for the upcoming scholarship gift basket auction, it may not be too late. Text 920/948-5354 or email Diane at dianekitchen@live.com ASAP, so that you can come to this fun event. If you are making a basket, please bring it to the Beaver Dam Country Club on the 15th between noon and 2 pm. You can also bring books and puzzles at this time. Bright Future team members will be at the door to help carry baskets and other items inside. It's important that the baskets are there early for set up. If this is not possible, let Diane know. You can pay for your dinner at this time too, if you would like. You'll still need to pick up an info packet at the registration table that night but it will save you a step.

John Noltner Wrap-Up

"Inspirational: I chose the word inspirational to describe John Noltner because he showed me new ways to outlook on the world. He was able to see beauty in the most simple of people, and finds a unique story in all of them. This has inspired me to talk to more people and learn about them."

This was one of many beautiful responses that high school students wrote after John Noltner's presentations in their art classes. I estimate that over 1600 people directly experienced one of Noltner's twenty-one presentations for twelve different school and community entities representing a broad range of ages and backgrounds. All was made possible through two years of lead work by our amazing "Unity in Community" core committee, Robin Hanson, Andrea Utrie, Anita Streich, and Bobbi Marck. Then, during the full week of residency activity, our membership stepped up to be ambassadors, reception hostesses, bakers, ushers, photographers, and more.

Thank you all for your support in spirit and in action.

We are grateful, too, to the nine community sponsors who contributed to make the “Belonging” project possible and to the Beaver Dam Community Library that has joined us in partnership for four years of community summer reads. Also, this is the fourth year that several of the state AAUW officers have attended our culminating “read” programs and have enthusiastically supported our community outreach efforts. Consuela Lopez, District 1 Coordinator, said, “It was the best community celebration I’ve ever been to. And I’m serious.”

Most of all, we are grateful to John Noltner who gave his time, talent, and spirit so generously to his hometown. Truly, there are no words to express the inspiration that he brought to Beaver Dam on so many levels. Perhaps the personal words attached to each of the 135 portraits that John took and the words from our young people say it best. Be sure to see John’s reflections about his return to his hometown and all of those portraits on Facebook <https://apeaceofmymind.org/2025/09/29/my-hometown/> and you can find the taping of Noltner’s culminating keynote address on the You Tube link at <https://dailydodge.com/videos>.

May we all continue the inspiration.

--Annette Kamps, AAUW “Unity in Community” Chair

“The enthusiastic response I saw at all of the events I attended is indicative of how well received John was by our community. I felt like we all needed to hear his message, especially during these chaotic times. And in studying what belonging means to each of us, we could see the importance of belonging to everyone else. We can all be better listeners and take better care of each other and build a better community.”

—Dee Disch

From Cindy Spangler “This is just so cool!!!! I am so proud of our AAUW group! Some of the faces I recognize many I don’t. But reading their comments about being in my community, warm my heart and brings tears to my eyes.”

Since moving to Beaver Dam from Palo Alto CA eleven years ago, I have noticed, and participated in, three events that I think have changed the face of this town for the better. The first was the Mural Fest in 2017. I think the number of murals that went up in a matter of days was seventeen. The head of the WallDogs mentioned at the time that more would appear. “Just watch,” she said. “This is just the beginning.” She was right. I’m guessing dozen or more have appeared since then — the community theater, Ooga, the Family Center (four in the lobby and one scheduled for the outside of the building on October 11). There are more I haven’t listed. The next major event was the National Peony Convention this past June. During that week 3000 people viewed the peony show in the local high school, many of whom enjoyed the events downtown as well. The third event was this one — John Noltner’s residency. I felt such a positive vibe in this town, and continue to be impressed by how talented John is as he captures personalities in his portraits. I can envision Stephen Bennet creating a mural of him for one of the Beaver Dam’s walls in the future. His message of peace was born in this town, and he continues to leave his footprint of peace on the world as he continues to travel. Kudos to those of you who made his visit happen.

--Marilyn Thomas

I think listening to John throughout the week caused many of us to open our minds and to look for ways to encourage unity and belonging in our community.

--Carmen Hanson

From Anita Streich “Having John Noltner visit Beaver Dam was such a gift for our library and community. His stories and conversations reminded us how important it is to listen to each other. The programs he led brought people together in a way that felt genuine and uplifting—we all left feeling more connected and inspired.”

