



# In Touch

Empowering potential in women and girls through education, research, advocacy, and philanthropy.



[www.aauwsc.org](http://www.aauwsc.org)

### January 8th

**Thursday, 12:00 p.m.**  
**Holiday Luncheon**

Il Granaio Italian Restaurant  
Mount Vernon  
Board Meeting follows at 2 p.m.  
\*\*\*\*\*

### January 15th

**Thursday, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Social Half Hour 12:30 p.m.**

General Meeting  
SCAF Building  
*Superintendent Ryan Ovenell presents information on the Safety & Infrastructure Levy*  
*Deb Narcisso follows to discuss the gender gap and financial literacy.*  
\*\*\*\*\*

### January 21st

**Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.**

JAVA BREAK  
Cookie Mill  
\*\*\*\*\*

### January 26th

**Monday**  
Advocacy Day  
(formerly Lobby Day)

## President's Message

Lael Williams

As we look forward to 2026, let's be thankful for our AAUW branch including new members, interesting meetings, a successful Giving Tuesday and the times we shared together. Let's also pause to remember a past member and spouses who passed away.

We begin the new year looking forward to not only informative meetings, book group selections, java breaks and day trippers' activities but also our Purses with Purpose fundraiser. These are the activities that bring us together. On April 16, 2026 our branch celebrates its 90th anniversary.

Wishing all of you good health and looking forward to the upcoming year.

## Programs for January

Mary Pilkington



Due to flooding, our traditional Holiday Luncheon at Il Granaio was rescheduled for January 8. RSVPs still available by contacting Nancy Russell and Georgi Proulx but do it quickly please by January 5. Cost is \$36.



January 15 will have a two-fold program. First, Superintendent Ryan Ovenell will present a short 10 minute, fact-based walkthrough of the Safety & Infrastructure Levy appearing on the February 10 ballot. Mr. Ovenell and Director of Communication, Evan Caldwell, will give a detailed look at current facility conditions, the types of projects included in the proposal, how levy rates are calculated in Washington, and how Stanwood-Camano compares with neighboring districts. A short question period will follow.



Following the superintendent, Deb Narcisso, our President-elect, will present a program on eliminating the gender gap in financial literacy. As a consultant to the Western Washington University Merriman Financial Literacy Program, Deb has knowledge of the studies and programs used to learn how financial literacy affects women's abilities to negotiate salaries, manage debt and make informed investment choices. Financial literacy results in better financial decisions, increased savings and lower levels of debt.

The findings of several studies has shown that men consistently score higher than women on measures of financial literacy across all age groups and nationalities. Deb's presentation will discuss the results of these studies and illustrate programs that aim to eliminate the financial literacy gender gap. As with Tech Trek, these programs include education for middle school girls.

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## Future Events

**February 5th**

**Thursday, 1:00 p.m.**

February Board Meeting  
SCAF Building  
\*\*\*\*\*

**February 12th**

**Thursday, 1:00 p.m.**

General Meeting  
Arrowhead Ranch Tour  
\*\*\*\*\*

**February 17th**

**Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.**

JAVA BREAK  
Cookie Mill  
For Coffee and Conversation



**What's going on at AAUW-WA?**

<https://aauw-wa.aauw.net/activities-information/calendar/>

Visit our branch website:  
[www.aauwsc.org](http://www.aauwsc.org)

### Public Policy

Go to:

AAUW Washington to keep up with happenings in the current legislative session and to learn about areas for action.

[www.aauw-wa.org](http://www.aauw-wa.org)

AAUW Action Network for Congressional items regarding the national issues for action.

<http://capwiz.com/aauw/home/>

## Public Policy - Advocacy Day, January 26

*Joanne Drewsen*

This is one of the biggest months for Public Policy. The **Legislative Session** starts on Jan 12th, and **Advocacy Day** is Jan 26th. As I let you all know last month, some bills have been prefiled and they can be found here.

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/prefiled.aspx>

What AAUW Advocacy Day looks like and what the priorities are will be a work in progress. It looks like the theme will be Artificial Intelligence. You can find the Washington State AI Task Force report for the State of Washington that was just released December 1st at this link: [WA AI Task Force Interim Report 12-1-2025 FINAL.pdf](#)

**Allies** are professional associations that prioritize bills in at least one of our issues areas. They publish relevant fact sheets, bill summaries, budget provisos, and/or have a useful bill tracker. Here is our Allies List for 2026. [WA AI Task Force Interim Report 12-1-2025 FINAL.pdf](#)

Many are still in the process of setting their priorities list for 2026, just as State of Washington AAUW is. [Review for 2026.docx - Google Docs](#)

Don't forget the **Two Minute Activist** <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/> - It keeps changing and has important legislation to look over and support according to your interests.

Please let me know how you would like to be involved in Advocacy Day and in advocating for bills vetted after that time.

## Stanwood Camano Give Success Thanks to YOU

*Georgi Proulx, Mary Raymond*

Thank you members, family and friends for the generous support of our Stanwood-Camano Give project on Giving Tuesday, December 2, to raise \$4000 for Tech Trek camperships in July 2026.

The day started with a midnight prize match winning donor and after [contributions](#) from 29 unique donors and 4 Win and Give prizes we surpassed our goal earning \$4055 which includes two pre-event donations from our members..wowza! Mary Raymond tried a strategy to put us ahead in a couple of the "drawing" matches and was very successful. Watch out for a new strategies and marketing for next year. AAUW and our girls will be winners...winners...winners with your continued support.

Let's do it again next Giving Tuesday on December 1, 2026.



## Tech Trek's New Director

*Mary Chesney*

Plans for Tech Trek camp continue. Jane Downey has been announced as Camp Director and Kim Schulze as Assistant Director. They will be learning their roles this coming year serving as assistants with Krislyn Davis. Jane is a retired teacher from Marysville who was actively involved in Tech Trek a few years ago.

In addition to a new future director, the camp leadership group is looking for a new site. The change of sites raises the possibility of an increased fee for camp, but nothing has been decided as of the time of writing this newsletter article.

Recruitment of Tech Trek campers will begin this month. I will be providing updates on the process as we move forward.



## Your 2025-2026 Board

### President

Lael Williams

### President-Elect

Deb Narcisso

### VP of Finance

Nancy Russell

### VP of Finance-Elect

(open)

### Co-VP of Membership

Lynda Buehring, Joyce Leak

### Secretary

Karen Walden

### VP of Program

Mary Pilkington

Assistants: Linda Demetre,  
Mary Raymond\*

### Public Policy

Joanne Drewsen

### Communications

Georgi Proulx, Martha Huyler

\* Appointed position, shares  
vote with VP

### Activity Leaders

#### Purses with Purpose 2026

Georgi Proulx, Mary Raymond

#### High School STEM Scholars

Linda Demetre, Lael Williams

#### Scholarship Chair

Karen Rogers

#### Tech Trek Chair

Mary Chesney

#### AAUW Funds Coordinator

Jackie DeFazio

#### Candidate & Issues Forum

(open)

#### Historian

Helen Smith

#### Diversity

Katie Farrey

#### Stanwood-Camano Give

Mary Raymond, Georgi Proulx

#### Sunshine

Anne Milton

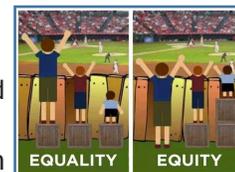
#### Newsletter Team

Georgi Proulx, Martha Huyler

## DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility) Spotlight

Katie Farrey

This year we are focusing on mental health with definitions and resources from NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness).



**Dissociative Disorders** involve an involuntary escape from reality, with a disconnection between thoughts, identity, consciousness, and memory. Up to 75% of people experience at least one depersonalization/derealization episode in their lives. Symptoms are usually a response to trauma (abuse, military combat) to keep those memories under control. Stressful situations can worsen symptoms. There are three types of dissociative disorders:

\*Dissociative amnesia involves difficulty remembering important information about one's self. It may be connected to a particular event or identity and life history (more rare). The onset is usually sudden and can last minutes, hours, days or rarely months or years.

\*Depersonalization disorder is characterized by ongoing feelings of detachment from actions, feelings, thoughts, and sensations, as if watching a movie. Sometimes feeling like people and things around them are unreal.

\*Dissociative identity disorder was formerly known as multiple personality disorder. The person feels like one or more voices are trying to take control and they alternate between multiple identities. The identities may have unique names, voices, mannerisms, or characteristics. There may be gaps in memory of everyday events, personal information, and trauma. It is more common in women. Men tend to deny symptoms and trauma history and exhibit more violent behavior. Treatment may involve psychotherapy, medication, or eye movement desensitization and reprocessing. Self-care may include keeping a journal, mindfulness (guiding yourself back to the present), and/or letting alter identities emerge in a safe place and time to allow experiences that may have been denied in an abusive childhood.

<https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/mental-health-conditions/dissociative-disorders/>

### Upcoming Opportunities:

National Poverty in America Awareness Month

Jan. 14th, 3:00 p.m., Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia, Sno-Isle Online.

<https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/events/6925efa9d6833e76917f3c6c>

Jan. 20th, National Day of Racial Healing <https://dayofracialhealing.org/about-ndorh/>

Jan. 19th, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Jan 19th, YMCA Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

<https://www.ymca-snoco.org/mlk/>

Jan 21st, 3:00 p.m., Ten Warning Signs of Alzheimer's, Sno-Isle Online

<https://sno-isle.bibliocommons.com/events/69279d25163b292f004e03cf>

Jan 24th, 7:00 p.m., Skagit Drag Live Vocals Show with Gina Touche and Friends, Lincoln Theatre <https://lincolnthatre.org/skagit-drag-live-vocals-show-gina-touche-friends>



## Special Branch Activities

### Day Trippers

*An informal gathering of members with time and interest to participate in a variety of outings.*

Lynda Buehring, Linda Lynn

### Movie Group

*Meet for a movie at our local Stanwood Cinema. Watch for an email invitation. Suggestions are encouraged.*

Anne Milton, Georgi Proulx

**JAVA Break** is held monthly alternating between the third Tuesday and third Wednesday 10:00 a.m. at the Cookie Mill. Please save the date, bring a friend!

*Our gatherings are a special time with friends to share memories and thoughts we usually don't have time to share at general meetings. Let's share a mug and great conversation... you never know where it's going to take us...!*

Nancy Voelckers, Georgi Proulx

### Book Group

*Open to all members. Join us for lively conversation if you've read the book or if you just want to come join the discussion.*

Katie Farrey  
Marianne McGarry-Bloom



[www.facebook.com/  
stanwoodcamanoaauw](http://www.facebook.com/stanwoodcamanoaauw)



## Book Group

Katie Farrey, Marianne McGarry-Bloom

All members are invited to join the Book Group whether you have read the book or just want to join the conversation. Please contact Katie Farrey if you want to be added to the email list.



### Monday January 5, 2:00 p.m. at the Home of Marianne McGarry-Bloom

The Secret Life of Sunflowers by Marta Molnar

*"When Hollywood auctioneer Emsley Wilson finds her famous grandmother's diary while cleaning out her New York brownstone, the pages are full of surprises. The first surprise is, the diary isn't her grandmother's. It belongs to Johanna Bonger, Vincent van Gogh's sister-in-law. With her business failing, an unexpected love turning up in her life, and family secrets unraveling, can she find answers in the past?"*

### Monday February 2, 2:00 p.m. at the Home of Judy Trammell

The Dictionary of Lost Words by Pip Williams

*"Esme is born into a world of words. Motherless and irrepressibly curious, she spends her childhood in the Scriptorium, an Oxford garden shed in which her father and a team of dedicated lexicographers are collecting words for the very first Oxford English Dictionary. Young Esme's place is beneath the sorting table, unseen and unheard. One day a slip of paper containing the word bondmaid flutters beneath the table. She rescues the slip and, learning that the word means "slave girl," begins to collect other words that have been discarded or neglected by the dictionary men."*

### Monday March 1, 2:00 p.m. at the Home of Darlene Hofbauer

My Beloved World by Sonia Sotomayor

*"An instant American icon--the first Hispanic on the U.S. Supreme Court--tells the story of her life before becoming a judge in an inspiring, surprisingly personal memoir. With startling candor and intimacy, Sonia Sotomayor recounts her life from a Bronx housing project to the federal bench, a progress that is testament to her extraordinary determination and the power of believing in oneself. She writes of her precarious childhood and the refuge she took with her passionately spirited paternal grandmother. She describes her resolve as a young girl to become a lawyer, and how she made this dream become reality: valedictorian of her high school class, summa cum laude at Princeton, Yale Law, prosecutor in the Manhattan D.A.'s office, private practice, federal district judge before the age of forty. She writes about her deeply valued mentors, about her failed marriage, about her cherished family of friends. Through her still-astonished eyes, America's infinite possibilities are envisioned anew in this book"*

For more information, contact Katie Farrey or Marianne McGarry-Bloom.



### Send a Little Sunshine

Anne Milton

Our branch has a Sunshine Committee to send good cheer and well wishes to members when needed. If you would like a card, phone call or email sent to one of our members, kindly reach out via email to Anne Milton, and we will honor your request.

### Check It Out !

How many ways can you find to get involved in our AAUW branch? From committees to outings to fellowship to presenting something new....take the opportunity to find something interesting.

Contact the person who submitted the article you will read using the roster of current members to discover how to participate or ask questions about something that interests you.



## Purses with Purpose April 25, 2026—Nearly There!

Mary Raymond, Georgi Proulx

Thank you to all of you who have made the effort to purchase and donate purses or have spread the word to friends and family to collect gently used purses. It has helped us greatly in working towards our goal.

The PWP Purse Processing team is still collecting purses and are nearly at the levels we need for a successful event. Please bring your donations to the January 8 luncheon or the general meeting on January 15. If you choose to make a dollar contribution please do so as soon as possible so the team knows their budget for purchasing live auction purses.

Mary Pilkington will begin her solicitation of businesses for certificates this month. If you solicit any items please coordinate with Mary Pilkington and Georgi Proulx so we don't approach businesses twice. Pass along any certificates to Georgi for recording and storage.

Carolyn Spector and Mary Raymond have submitted grant applications with our local Tulalip and Stillaguamish tribes.

Ticket sales will begin for branch members the end of January/beginning of February. Watch for more information.

Your Steering Committee is comprised of:

Procurement Team: Jackie DeFazio, Karen Walden, Joanne Drewsen, Jill Johnstone

Auxiliary Procurement Coordinator: Mary Pilkington

Live Auction Organizer: Karen Walden

Silent Auction Set Up: Cheryl Gruger, Bev Maxwell

Fulfillment/Bagging Team: Jill Johnstone, Linda Lynn

Catering Coordinator and Centerpieces: Linda Demetre

Luncheon Table Set Up: Gay Campbell

Wine and Champagne: Helen Smith

Raffles: Lynda Buehring

Grants: Carolyn Spector



A girl can  
never have  
too many  
purses

This is a TEAM effort; it takes ALL of us to make this successful! Put April 24 on your calendar for helping set up in the afternoon that Friday at Camano Center.

**Volunteer Coordination Team** will solicit volunteers from our members, the schools, and other organizations to help us set up on Friday afternoon, serve the meal, manage silent auction sold purses, and help us return the space to original condition after the event. Mary and Georgi could use some help in coordinating the volunteers.

**Business Sponsorships Team** personally approaches businesses in the community for cash donations. This team can be extremely effective and has been very successful the past two events. Martha Huyler has started this process but could use some help. Please contact her if you are interested.

TEAM WORK will make our event the best and most FUN ever. Join in and help today.

This branch has proven it can work as a team....keep it up! You do not need to do it by yourself nor will you have to.

Contact Mary Raymond or Georgi Proulx with any questions.



### Samantha Fozard's Art Marianne McGarry-Bloom

AAUW Stanwood-Camano members attended the celebration of Samantha Fozard's culminating project at Fairhaven, Western Washington University, Bellingham. Her children's book with illustrations was featured. Samantha is one of our three recipients of our 2024 university scholarships. Samantha's parents expressed their gratitude for the financial help given. Her success is our success.



Pictured left to right: Helen Smith, Samantha Fozard, Lynda Buehring, Marianne McGarry-Bloom



## Stanwood-Camano Branch Celebrates 90 Years

*Helen Smith, first published in 2016 for our 80th anniversary*

April 16 is the 90th anniversary of this AAUW branch's founding day! Established in 1936, in Arlington, Washington, just 10 years past the creation of AAUW in Washington State, our branch started with fifteen charter members. Dues in 1936 were \$2.50. Nine women graduated from University of Washington, four from Washington State College (WSC) (now Washington State University), one from Colorado University, and one from Vassar. Their first year together they studied the history and purpose of AAUW. Later, the branch became known as the

Arlington-Stanwood branch, and eventually what is now known as the Stanwood-Camano Island branch.

In the 70's the branch began to raise money for college scholarships sponsoring a local yearly art show. For at the next 35 years, art shows were the major fundraiser activity until there were so many art shows in the area that our profits declined. Purses with Purpose began in 2013. Our Purses with Purpose benefit luncheon and live/silent auctions have been an incredible source of scholarship funds for Tech Trek and college scholarships.



Looking forward to our celebration at Purses with Purpose 2026.

### Program Schedule for 2026



- February 12 Arrowhead Ranch Tour, *Arrowhead Ranch*
- March 12 Debbie Dimitre presents "Annie Oakley and Calamity Jane"  
*Utsalady Ladies Aid Building*
- April 9 Washington Poet Laureate  
*(location to be determined)*
- May 14 High School STEM Scholar Recognition and Tech Trek Campers  
*Stanwood United Methodist Church*
- June 28 Scholarship Tea/Annual Meeting  
*Camano City Schoolhouse*

### General Meeting Minutes - No General Minutes for December

# Happy New Year!

**May the tears that you cried  
in 2025 water the seeds  
you're planting for 2026.**

**~Martha & Georgi**