



Stanwood-Camano Branch of AAUW

In Touch

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

March 2026

Founded April 16, 1936 ~ Celebrating 90 years Edited by Martha Huyler and Georgi Proulx



www.aauwsc.org

March 5th

Thursday, 1:00 p.m.

March Board Meeting

SCAF Building

March 12th

Thursday, 1:00 p.m.

Social Half Hour 12:30 p.m.

General Meeting

Utsalady Ladies Aid Building
78 Utsalady Rd, Camano Island

*Debbie Dimitri presents Annie
Oakley and Calamity Jane*

March 18th

Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.

JAVA BREAK

Cookie Mill

*For Coffee and Conversation
Bring a Prospective Member*



President's Message

Lael Williams

Welcome to early Spring! I'm greatly pleased by all the work our members have been doing on behalf of AAUW Stanwood-Camano!

Lynda Buehring and Joyce Leak have created several different ways to advertise and bring in new members. We welcome our new members, Wendy McKane and Sherri Williams. A wonderful direction for our group!

Georgi Proulx, Mary Raymond and their team have worked tirelessly to bring Purses with Purpose 2026 to life processing over 260 purses, soliciting auxiliary items, contacting business sponsors, planning the luncheon, applying for grants, and preparing our two raffles. Preparation for our major 7th biennial fundraising event is in capable hands.

Scholarship, Tech Trek and High School STEM Scholar committees have kicked into gear in their work to honor and celebrate young women and their goals for education happening later this spring.

I would like to personally invite you to attend our upcoming meetings and events as we celebrate our branch's 90th anniversary in April! Looking forward to seeing not only our new members but members who have been with the branch for years. Take time to celebrate with us. If you need transportation please reach out, and we'll be sure you have a ride.

Thank you!!

March 12: Debbie Dimitre Performs

Mary Pilkington

Join us on Thursday, March 12, at the Utsalady Ladies Aid Building for northwest storyteller and actress, Debbie Dimitre's anticipated performance. Debbie has been entertaining, inspiring, and educating audiences with her historical and dramatic presentations since 1987. This year she will be introducing us to Annie Oakley and Calamity Jane.

Built in 1923, the historic Utsalady Ladies Aid Building (78 Utsalady Road, Camano Island) is the perfect venue for our general meeting. There is no zoom available for this meeting.



Debbie Dimitre as Annie Oakley

Social Half Hour begins at 12:30 p.m. followed by the program at 1:00 p.m. Please email Anne Milton if you can provide savory or sweet treats.

Debbie Dimitre has visited us several times and never fails to entertain and inform. You'll not want to miss this!

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Future Events

April 2nd

Thursday, 1:00 p.m.

April Board Meeting
SCAF Building

April 9th

Thursday, 1:00 p.m.

General Meeting
Open to the Public
Washington State Poet Laureate
SCAF Building

April 21st

Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.

JAVA BREAK
Cookie Mill
For Coffee and Conversation
Bring a Prospective Member



What's going on at AAUW-WA?

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

Visit our branch website:
www.aauwsc.org

Public Policy

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

<https://aauw-wa.aauw.net/actions-we-take/>

National AAUW Take Action
<https://www.aauw.org/act/>

Membership Corner—Welcome To Our Organization

Lynda Buehring, Joyce Leak



We are pleased to welcome retired teacher, Sherrie Williams, as a new member of our organization. Many members had the opportunity to meet her at our monthly movie meet-up, and we are delighted that she has joined us. Sherrie brings decades of experience in education and a passion for community engagement. We look forward to her insights and contributions as part of our group.

Day Trippers: On Friday, February 20, Nancy Russell and her husband, along with Lynda Buehring, Linda Demetre, Lael Williams, and Jenny Al Shafie, gathered for a memorable evening out. The aroma of freshly baked bread greeted us as we entered Pacioni's Italian Restaurant and Lounge, nestled in the heart of downtown Mt. Vernon. The cozy lighting and warm decor made us feel right at home, while the tantalizing Italian cuisine was both comforting and flavorful. Plates of pasta arrived steaming at our table, and the lively atmosphere sparked plenty of laughter and conversation among friends.

After savoring our meal and sharing lively conversation, we made our way to the Lincoln Theatre for an evening of laughter. Cozy Comedy was presenting the finals of the annual comedy competition: Washington's Funniest Mammal! The contest started with fifty of the state's top comedians and had narrowed to just four talented finalists, each performing their best routines for the next two hours. Audience members got to play a special role in the fun by judging and voting to help select the winner of the \$2,500 grand prize.

It was an enjoyable evening together, exploring a Mount Vernon favorite and experiencing the charm of the historic Lincoln Theatre with fellow AAUW members.

Understanding the Essence of Sisterhood

What Does Sisterhood Mean?

Sisterhood refers to the close bond, support, and solidarity that exists among women or girls, regardless of whether they are connected by blood. It is rooted in a deep sense of unity, empathy, and mutual respect, and is often shaped by shared experiences, goals, or struggles. Through sisterhood, women are encouraged to uplift one another, provide emotional support, and collaborate to overcome challenges together.

Key Aspects of Sisterhood

- **Support and Encouragement:** Members of a sisterhood stand by each other, offering comfort, advice, and motivation in both good times and difficult moments.
- **Unity and Solidarity:** Sisterhood creates a sense of belonging and togetherness, inspiring women to unite for common causes or personal growth.
- **Empowerment:** Through the bonds of sisterhood, women empower each other to achieve their full potential, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for their rights.
- **Trust and Loyalty:** Trust serves as the foundation of sisterhood. Members rely on one another, maintain confidence, and offer support without judgment.

Forms of Sisterhood

Sisterhood can be experienced in many settings: among sisters within families, within circles of friends, through organizations or sororities, or in communities and social movements that unite women around shared values or goals.

Why Sisterhood Matters

Sisterhood helps build a nurturing environment in which women can flourish. It counters feelings of isolation, fosters confidence, and motivates collective action for positive change. Whether formal or informal, the bonds of sisterhood are powerful forces for both individual growth and social transformation.

Special Thanks to Members

The kindness and steadfast support of our members remind us of the strength we share but also deepens our appreciation for the unique bond we have built together in AAUW. This sense of unity and empowerment is what makes our group so special and inspires us to continue contributing and uplifting others in return.

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).

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the diagnosis for longer term symptoms resulting from trauma. Trauma is a deeply distressing or disturbing experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope. Accidents, military combat, assault, natural disasters, violence, loss and life-changing events can be life threatening traumas that may have short term or longer term results. Systemic and interpersonal experiences like racism, discrimination, and marginalization are also traumatic, creating ongoing harm and stress. The effect of trauma varies, depending on an individual's resilience, support systems and the nature of the event. About 4.1% of the US population experience PTSD, with women more likely to experience it than men. PTSD can be considered the body's inability to return to normal in the months after a traumatic event triggers a "fight or flight" response. Support and compassion following a traumatic event is critical. A combination of psychotherapy and medication is the most effective treatment for PTSD.

<https://www.nami.org/types-of-conditions/posttraumatic-stress-disorder/?tab=abouttab-0>

Upcoming Opportunities:

Women's History Month:

Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future

<https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/womens-history-theme-2026/>

National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month:
The Power of Support

March 7, 12:00 P.M. Lincoln Theatre
Sensory Friendly viewing of the film Hook

<https://lincolnthatre.org/film-hook-sensory-friendly>

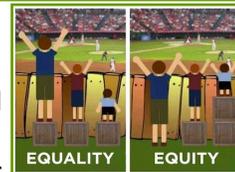
March 31, International Transgender Day of Visibility

Tech Trek 2026

Mary Chesney

Tech Trek 2026 will be held July 12-18 at Seattle Pacific University. Our local school districts submitted eleven nominees. As of this publication, eight have submitted an application.

The selection team is looking forward to their selection of this year's campers. More information will be shared with the membership as it evolves.



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 March 2, 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. 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"

Monday April 6, 2:00 p.m. at the Home of Martha Huyler

My Friends by Frederik Backman

"#1 New York Times bestselling author Fredrik Backman, who "captures the messy essence of being human" (The Washington Post), returns with an unforgettably funny, deeply moving tale of four teenagers whose friendship creates a bond so powerful that it changes a stranger's life twenty-five years later "

Monday May 4, 2:00 p.m. Location to be determined

American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins

"Lydia Quixano Perez lives in the Mexican city of Acapulco. She runs a bookstore. She has a son, Luca, the love of her life, and a wonderful husband who is a journalist. And while there are cracks beginning to show in Acapulco because of the drug cartels, her life is, by and large, fairly comfortable. Even though she knows they'll never sell, Lydia stocks some of her all-time favorite books in her store. And then one day a man enters the shop to browse and comes up to the register with four books he would like to buy--two of them her favorites. Javier is erudite. He is charming. And, unbeknownst to Lydia, he is the jefe of the newest drug cartel that has gruesomely taken over the city. When Lydia's husband's tell-all profile of Javier is published, none of their lives will ever be the same. Forced to flee, Lydia and eight-year-old Luca soon find themselves miles and worlds away from their comfortable middle-class existence. Instantly transformed into migrants, Lydia and Luca ride la bestia--trains that make their way north toward the United States, which is the only place Javier's reach doesn't extend. As they join the countless people trying to reach el norte, Lydia soon sees that everyone is running from something. But what exactly are they running to?"

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.



Public Policy - It's Never Too Late!

Joanne Drewsen

First, it is never too late to comment on any bill that you support. If it doesn't pass in this 2026 Legislative session, it gives information to your legislators for the future. **Write, call, make your voice heard!**

Second, sign up for weekly Legislative updates on the AAUW-WA State website, if you are interested in more information on what's going on.

Select: <https://aauw-wa.aauw.net>

Select "Actions We Take" at the top, then "Legislative Tracking" in the drop down menu.

Week 6 Update including the bills that State of WA AAUW are supporting:

The 2026 Legislative session is now 70% complete, after having passed the House of Origin cutoff on Tuesday, the 17th. This cutoff date was a significant deadline because, by this date, bills had to pass out of the chamber (Senate or House) that introduced them. The vast number of bills introduced are dwindling and legislators are now back in committees, largely considering a smaller set of bills already debated, amended, and passed by the other chamber. At this point in session, the process moves at lightning speed, allowing just 8 days for bills that have "made it" to be heard and passed out of the opposite body's policy committee.

For an inside look at how a legislative committee works collaboratively to understand emerging AI technology (Chatbots) and determine what consumer protection regulations are needed, watch the House Committee on Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans February 20 public hearing:

[House Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans - TVW](#)

Brief bill status: To view on line please visit <https://app.leg.wa.gov/BillSummary/>, enter the bill number, and press return.

Still in PLAY but no action alert:

Chatbots: *HB 2225 / SB 5984* Concerning regulation of artificial intelligence companion chatbots.

Prior Authorization- Healthcare: *SB 5395/HB 1566* Making improvements to transparency and accountability in the prior authorization determination process.

Domestic Worker Protections: *SB 6053 / HB 2355* Establishing labor protections for domestic workers.

Pregnancy-related accommodations: *SB 6014* workplace protections.

Human Trafficking: *SB 5936:* Prevention and remedies for human trafficking.

DEAD, no further action:

High-risk AI Regulation: *HB 2157 / SB 6120* Regulating high-risk artificial intelligence system development, deployment, and use.

Medication Abortion: Access at postsecondary educational institutions to medication for abortion - *SB 5826/ HB 2535.*



Program Schedule for 2026



April 9	1:00 p.m.	Washington Poet Laureate—Open to the Public <i>SCAF Building</i>
May 14	7:00 p.m.	High School STEM Scholar Recognition and Tech Trek Campers <i>Stanwood United Methodist Church</i>
June 28	1:00 p.m.	Scholarship Tea/Annual Meeting <i>Camano City Schoolhouse</i>

Purses with Purpose April 25, 2026—Rounding the Bend!

Mary Raymond, Georgi Proulx

This branch is awesome! You have donated 260 purses for our live and silent auctions. This will be the best event ever thanks to all of you.

Currently Jackie DeFazio and Karen Walden are matching live auction purses with the auxiliary items collected by Mary Pilkington and Marianne McGarry-Bloom from community businesses and generous and creative artists.

Certificates: La Conner has been thoroughly solicited by Mary Pilkington and Marianne McGarry-Bloom so please do not ask there. Check with Georgi for Stanwood/Camano businesses that have donated before asking them.

Ticket sales (\$50 each) began for branch members February 15; previous patrons will be invited March 1.

NOTE: When planning seating arrangements please keep in mind that final changes in seating requests must be submitted to Mary Chesney by April 17.

VOLUNTEERS: We still need recorders and runners for the silent auction, live auction spotters plus set up and take down. Contact Georgi Proulx, Mary Raymond or the lead listed below to sign up. If you can assist in coordinating the volunteers please contact Georgi or Mary.

Your Steering Committee is comprised of:

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

Auxiliary Procurement Coordinator: Mary Pilkington

Live Auction Organizers: Jackie DeFazio, Karen Walden

Silent Auction Set Up: 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

Tickets/Tables: Mary Chesney

Business Sponsors: Martha Huyler

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 Friday, April 24, on your calendar for helping set up in the afternoon at Camano Center; time to be announced.

TEAM WORK is what makes 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.



Scholarship Season Opened February 1

Marianne McGarry Bloom, Karen Rogers

Applications and required documentation are available at www.aauwsc.org/scholarship.

Applications for our AAUWSC Scholarship are now live at our website. Applications will be accepted until April 30, 2026.

Past history shows that word of mouth is one of the most effective ways of reaching out to our scholars. Students from our area entering their Junior or Senior year of university or pursuing a Master's Degree or graduates of our high schools are eligible. Family members of our AAUWSC Board or Scholarship Committee are excluded from applying.

Please spread the word.

Meet Our Member

Wendy McKane

Wendy grew up moving around quite a bit as a child. "I was born in the US, but we moved to Abqaiq, Saudi Arabia when I was 5, then to Marsa al Brega, Libya when I was 7, then Seroe Colorado, Aruba when I was 10. I returned to the US when I was 14 and graduated high school in Baytown, Texas."

"While moving around seemed hard when I was a child, I'm so very grateful for the experiences I had, both good and not so good, because it gives me a better perspective of how the world lives. Travel, especially living in other cultures, is the best way to open the mind."

What was it like for girls when you grew up? "Interesting question. For me, I think the question is really, 'What was it like for girls *where* I grew up?' While the US and the western world was experiencing the second wave of feminism, the Middle East and northern Africa were experiencing a backlash against Westernism (mostly due to the corporate imperialism of the post WWII world-but that's a whole other conversation). That backlash extended to the more western roles of women. So, there was a vestige of opportunities, for example, my mom was allowed to drive and work in Saudi. The catch was she had to carry written permission from my father on her at all times. On the other hand, there were strict separations of male and female life. My mom and I were not allowed in the ice cream shop, my father could go in and buy us a cone, but we were not allowed to enter. Arranged marriages were very much the norm and considered an honor if extended to westerners."

Colleges and Degrees: "I attended the University of Alabama and received my B.S. in Natural Sciences (a fancy way to say a triple degree in Chemistry, Biology, and Physics) with a minor in American Studies. After I had my children, I went back and received my M. Ed. in Secondary Education."

"I was a qualitative and quantitative Chemist for Exxon Research and Engineering. I then went on to manage an arson investigation lab (sounds a whole lot more CSI than it really is!) I taught high school science at a private college preparatory school. Lastly, I was a trainer at MAC Cosmetics."

Wendy's passions are gardening and reading. "If I'm not outside with dirt under my fingernails, I'm probably curled up reading my latest library find. I love to travel and hope to go to Scandinavia soon as that's one area of the world I have not visited yet."

What would surprise us about you?

"I am dichromatic. My left eye is blue-green and my right is brown."

Reasons for joining AAUW: "At a time when women are being diminished in our country's society, it's more important than ever to join together and stand strong."



General Meeting Minutes - February 12, 2026

Program: Dena Aitken from Arrowhead Ranch gave us a tour and overview of the facility and its programs.

Call to Order: The meeting was opened by President Lael Williams at about 1:45 p.m.

Minutes: The minutes from January 15, 2026, as published in the February newsletter, received approval by majority vote. Deb Narcisso moved the motion, which was seconded by Martha Huyler.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Nancy Russell reported the balance of our three accounts as of January 31, 2026. Scholarship checking account is \$11,043.36, Scholarship Money Market holds \$36,900.73, and the Operating account stands at \$4,100.30. The following details were provided:

Income: The Stanwood Camano Give check was received in the amount of \$1,692.67. This amount included an individual donation submitted to SCAF for AAUW and prize money. The total income from SCGive will include an additional \$1,862.33, which was received in December from SCAF (via Mighty Cause) for online contributions made through SCGive. There was also a Tech Trek donation of \$250.

Expenses: The Holiday Luncheon expense was \$1,052.25. The annual Washington Secretary of State Corporation Filing for Non-Profits incurred a \$20 fee. SCAF membership was \$150.

VP Programs: Linda Demetre shared that our March general meeting will be at the Utsalady Ladies Aid Building on Camano. Debbie Dimitre will present Annie Oakley and Calamity Jane. We have one new member. Her name is Sherri Williams.

Day Trippers: Lynda Buehring reminded everyone about the upcoming Comedy Night at the Lincoln Theater in Mount Vernon on February 20. Our group will be seated in section "L". Members interested in attending need to RSVP to Lynda Buehring by February 16. Her committee is also working on organizing a trip to Seattle using Lite Rail.

Public Policy: Joanne Drewsen provided an update from Advocacy Day. Ten AAUW legislative bills were approved to move forward in the legislative process. Three bi-partisan bills about Artificial Intelligence are significant to members and align with organizational objectives. She encouraged members to contact legislators to support these bills. Summaries of the specific bills can be found in the February newsletter.

Purses with Purpose Auction: Jackie DeFazio reported that the silent auction purses compilation has been completed. The live auction purses procurement is nearly complete. Karen Walden donated over 30 of her handmade purses, which will be displayed on a dedicated table. Linda Demetre suggested that we try to include a crab dinner as one of the auxiliary items. Someone will contact Rose Olson who may be able to help with this. We are working to find volunteers for the auction table setup. Tickets for the auction will be available for members soon for \$50 each. The link to the ticket purchase website will be emailed to members shortly. Linda Demetre requested vases for table flower arrangements and demonstrated the required sizes.

Scholarships: Karen Rogers reported that the scholarship packets are ready to be sent to high schools next week for Running Start students. We advertise to them through the high school counseling departments.

She and Marianne McGarry-Bloom have been updating the scholarship application form. The revised application is active as of today on our website and on WashBoard.org, a free platform that connects WA students with scholarship opportunities tailored to their profiles. Application process begins now.

STEM Scholars: Lael Williams reported that the letters have been sent to the high schools.

Tech Trek: Eleven recommendations have been received. It was suggested that there needs to be some sort of follow-up from the teachers to make sure that applications from the students are filled out and turned in.

Book Group: Katie Farrey told us that book group will meet to discuss the book, My Beloved World on March 2.

Java Break: The next Java Break will be held at the Cookie Mill on Tuesday, February 17 at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment: President Lael Williams adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Walden, Secretary



Don't cling to a
mistake just because
you spent a lot of time
making it.