

## Change of venue, change of plans for February

Those of us\* who attended the January meeting at Mt. Baker Theatre won't be too surprised to learn that our venue has changed for February. Word is that there will be no heat in the MBT Encore room for at least another two months, and no one needs to suffer through another 50-degree meeting!

**So, we will meet at noon, Feb. 10, at Lombardi's Italian Restaurant, 21 Bellwether Way.** (If you are not familiar with it, it used to be Giuseppe's, and is nestled between Anthony's and The Hearthfire restaurants.)

Our reservation is under "AAUW" and our only plan is to each order ourselves a nice meal, enjoy some good conversation and do a little branch business.

We will try to reschedule our February speaker, music therapist Gayle Cloud, for another time.

There will be a jar for College Pantry donations.

See more about the January meeting on Page 2.

\* *Editor's note: I chickened out because of the cold, and didn't attend in January. Sort of a sorry/not sorry thing!*



Whatcom Branch



**Lombardi's lunch order inspiration? In a way: yes, but also: no. Confused? This is actually a picture created by our own tech expert, Judi Edwards, by using artificial intelligence. See her article on Page 3.**

### Also in this issue:

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**The January meeting was *Bracing!***

Judi Edwards and Catherine Chambers presented information to a cold group of AAUW members at the Encore Room on Jan 13. On a day when temps were close to zero, the MBT Encore Room furnace gave up.

AAUW’s Lobby Day at the State Legislature was the focus of the meeting. Judi focused on SB 5838, the establishment of an artificial intelligence task force. This bill is on AAUW State’s list of supported bills. Judi gave us a bit of history and background on AI. The AI landscape is evolving rapidly, and no one is really sure what it will look like in a year. A lot of functions with computer involvement are being called AI. AI seems to be the media’s latest buzzword.

The media is even calling inventory control and purchase tracking (something that has been around for a long time) artificial intelligence. As a long time software engineer and database administrator, Judi says it really is not intelligent at all.



**Brrr! Coats and coffee were required at the January AAUW meeting. Above, Catherine Chambers and Carolyn Kinne.(Photos courtesy of Judi Edwards)**



There are many terms in use, so here are some concrete definitions.

"Artificial intelligence" means technologies that enable machines, particularly computer software, to simulate human intelligence.

"Generative artificial intelligence" means technology that can mimic human ability to learn patterns from substantial amounts

of data and create content based on the underlying training data, guided by a user or prompt. "Machine learning" means a process by which an artificial intelligence is fed significant volumes of data, allowing the artificial intelligence to learn and adapt without following explicit instructions from a developer.

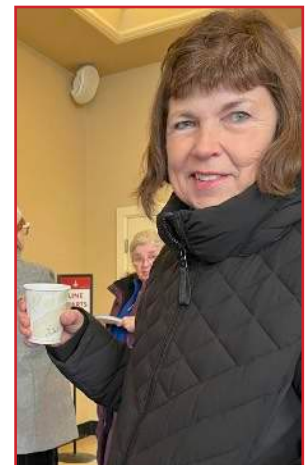
In the course of Judi’s research on AI she found that AI is altering the workforce and all continue to do so: IBM and others are

already hiring workers with Liberal Arts, History and language skills. These skills are used to “educate” AI systems. STEM education will evolve.

Even though the media is having a heyday with AI it is important to remember that this technology has been with us for a very long time. But until recently with the advances in computer power and storage capacity, AI has the proven potential to be a threat to intellectual property. As with the development of our copywrite laws, so AI needs to be wrapped in safeguards to protect art, music, literature and personal privacy. We have a long way to go.

*Submitted by:  
Judi Edwards, CCP, MBA  
AAUW Whatcom  
Branch Co-President*

**This meeting ended early as the 53 degree temperature in the room was rapidly rendering all our brain cells inoperative. Even the hot coffee got cold by the time you took it to your seat. At left, Susan Moen. At right, Carol Simmer.**



## Time to think about two new board positions



We have two board positions open for the 2024-2026 period: treasurer and membership vice-president. The term begins July 1, 2024 and ends June 30, 2026. The treasurer position does not require you to be an accountant or a financial person: can you balance a checkbook and write checks to pay bills? Our current treasurer Judith Paulson has graciously agreed to train and mentor the new person. (Once again, we thank Judith for taking over the position upon the death of our dear friend Kathy Cole.)

The membership position just needs a person to be friendly, outgoing and, well, that is most of us. The duties of membership cover presence at events, attending tables with informational materials and just generally promoting the group. Our current outgoing membership chairs are very willing to mentor and train if needed.

The treasurer and membership chairs work together to process new members and dues through the National AAUW Web Portal. So, having a computer and not too much technophobia is super helpful.

A nominating committee is forming. We'll keep you posted!

*Submitted by Judi Edwards*

### AAUW State Convention

The AAUW state convention will be held April 21 via Zoom.  
Go to <https://aauw-wa.aauw.net/> for the state website.

## Whatcom Fundraising for Tech Trek

A Tech Trek targeted fundraiser has been proposed by Co-President Uzma Ahmad. She has offered to host a dinner at her home to raise funds for this event. Information on time, date, and cost per plate will be forthcoming..

The State AAUW Tech Trek committee has set the fee for 2024 to be \$1700 per girl. The deadline for funds to be deposited for this event is April 1, 2024. The funds raised last year for us by Community Coop shoppers is still in our coffers, and will be used this year.

Whatcom Branch Tech Trek committee members hope to send several young women to the camp this summer. If you wish to make a separate donation, you may use this link: <https://techtrek-wa.aauw.net/> Please note the Whatcom Branch on your donation.

If you would prefer to write a check: Make out the check to the AAUW Special Projects Fund and mail it to:

Special Projects Fund  
PO Box 1665

Bellevue, WA 98009-1665 and specify the branch and Tech Trek on the check.

Note: the Special Projects Fund is a 501c3 and so all contributions are tax deductible.





## Mark your calendar!

### February

#### Feb. 10 General Meeting

Lomardi's Italian Restaurant, 21 Bellwether Way, at noon.

#### Feb. 22 AAUW Book Club,

12:30 p.m. at Affinity Apartments Library, 3930 Affinity Lane, just off Telegraph Road. Use the keypad by the front door to have Kay Davin buzz you in.

Questions? Gwen Parker,  
360-224-6027

Book is *Rough Sleepers*, by Tracy Kidder,  
Hardback, 2024. 320pp/NF

#### Feb. 24 Executive Board meeting, 9 a.m.– via Zoom

## Thanks for the gloves!

Robin Lynn Kagan sends her thanks to everyone who donated to her glove drive for women at the YWCA. There are 50 women there, and 30 pairs of gloves were donated. (More would still be welcome — it is only February!)

## AAUW HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARS RECOGNITION 2024 has been canceled for this year

Due to a lack members willing to sign-up for the jobs necessary to produce this event, the AAUW-Whatcom Board has decided to POSTPONE this event until 2025.

Approximately 40 high school junior female students in 12 high schools in Whatcom County participated in last year's event.

Perhaps 2025 will produce a new and improved format for the event. During this spring and fall, interested members can meet to discuss and plan for the 2025 event. I call on all members to consider participating in some way to make 2025's event special. One important part of the event is to invite a female speaker to motivate the scholars to continue their education. We ask the speaker to describe her path to the profession she currently holds. It is always a great story to hear!

All members should think about their current and past contacts that might qualify as our guest speaker — the more suggestions, the better!

For questions about the event, to volunteer for committee work, or to offer suggestions for a speaker or for improvement to the event, call or email me.

Thank you,  
*Carol Simmer*  
Long-time co-organizer

## **The next six Whatcom AAUW Book Club picks for 2024**

### **February**

***Rough Sleepers***, by Tracy Kidder

Hardback, 2024. 320pp/NF *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER • The story of an inspiring doctor who helped to create a program to care for Boston's homeless community—by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*,

### **March**

***The Hundred Years' War on Palestine***, by Rashid Khalidi

Paperback, 2021. 336pp/NF

Drawing on a wealth of untapped archival materials and the reports of generations of family members - mayors, judges, scholars, diplomats, and journalists - Khalidi traces a hundred years of colonial war on the Palestinians.

### **April**

***Demon Copperhead***, by Barbara Kingsolver

Hardback, 2022. 560pp/F WINNER OF THE 2023 PULITZER PRIZE

Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, *Demon Copperhead* is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer. Relayed in his own unsparing voice, Demon braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves and crushing losses. Through all of it, he reckons with his own invisibility in a popular culture where even the superheroes have abandoned rural people in favor of cities.

Many generations ago, Charles Dickens wrote *David Copperfield* from his experience as a survivor of institutional poverty and its damages to children. Dickens is not a prerequisite for readers of this novel, but he provided its inspiration.

### **May**

***Meet Me at the Museum***, by Anne Youngson

Paperback, 2019. 285pp/F

Letters between an English farm wife and a museum curator in Denmark evolve into a relationship of reflection and thoughtful inspection of two lives well lived as well as hope for what may come next.

### **June**

***Mean Spirit***, by Linda Hogan

Paperback, 1991. 384pp/Hist.F

An earlier take on the Osage atrocities, currently popularized in *Killers of the Flower Moon*.

### **July**

***The Quisling Factor***, by Janet Oakley (local author)

Paperback, 2020. 468pp/Hist.F Sequel to *The Jossing Affair*.

Treason. Espionage. Revenge. In the aftermath of WWII, ex-intelligence agent Tore Haugland tries to adjust to life in his newly freed country with the woman he loves. But he still has to testify against a Norwegian traitor -- one of the monsters of the German occupation -- whom he helped to capture.

## AAUW Out and About



Members **Barb Craig and Margo Hammond**, as seen recently at Maui Ocean Center: The Aquarium of Hawai'i. They volunteered in the Humpbacks of Hawai'i exhibit, sharing facts about whales, and also at the observation deck aiding people in viewing the migrating humpback whales in the nearby bay.

### Stanwood-Camano Purses with Purpose

Want a day out? Perhaps take in Stanwood- Camano Branch's 6th biennial **Purses with Purpose** silent and live auctions of donated, new and gently-used designer purses and luncheon on Saturday, April 27, 2024.

Their April 2022 event enjoyed 150 community members gathering for a day of FUNdraising for the branch scholarship program. The proceeds raised from this event fund three \$6000 scholarships in 2022 and three \$10,000 scholarships for 2023.

Due to the generosity of the community, the branch will also provide camperships for entering 8th grade girls from the Stanwood, Camano Island, Arlington and Lakewood middle schools to attend the AAUW Tech Trek week-long resident science camp in July. All proceeds from **Purses with Purpose** go towards Camano's Tech Trek and university scholarships programs.

### New parents

Welcome to a new addition to the AAUW "family." Our member **Ying Bao and her husband Reid** are now parents to a baby boy named Tai. Congratulations!



### It has been a while...

Whatcom Branch has not had a fund raiser for quite a few months. That has to change, and the following women have formed a fundraising committee: **Judi Edwards, Catherine Chambers, Lynda Buehring and Carol Simmer**. They will be glad to hear ideas. Also, contact Lynda Buehring for more info on the Purses with Purpose event, at right.

## Happy February Birthday!

Barbara Ellis-Quinn	5
Sabah Randhawa	6
Renee Sherrer	6
Jo Pullen	15
Teizeen Mohamedali	21



## Cascadia sponsorship

The Whatcom Branch Executive Board has again voted to support our local **Cascadia International Film Festival** with a donation of \$500.

You will see our logo on much of their advertising for this year's events.

**See below for a festival-related screening.**

## More Out and About...

Pacific Northwest film premiere and panel discussion will explore feminism, and LGBTQ+ women's rights, on March 8

Screening of "Love Letters" follows the remarkable love story of professor, feminist scholar and Bellingham native Catharine R. Stimpson and musicologist Elizabeth Wood.

Western Washington University in partnership with CASCADIA International Women's Film Festival will host "'Love Letters': A Film Screening and Conversation with Catharine R. Stimpson, Elizabeth Wood, and Greta Schiller," in celebration of International Women's Day, on Friday, March 8, at 7:30 p.m. in the WWU Performing Arts Center Main Stage.

The event is free and open to the public, but seating is limited, with advanced registration and tickets required. Ticketing via the WWU PAC Box Office will be open from Monday, January 22, 2024, until the venue reaches capacity.

We have an AAUW link to the Meetup invite at <https://meetu.ps/e/MSzgp/LSKPJ/i>  
For more information, here is the WWU link:

<https://news.wvu.edu/pacific-northwest-film-premiere-and-panel-discussion-to-explore-feminism-women-s-and-lgbtq-rights>

## Welcome to AAUW

Whatcom Branch of American Association of University Women invites you to join us.

Membership is open to college graduates and those with associate degrees from accredited schools. We offer speakers and various interest groups.

Our mission is to offer scholarships and support numerous programs to help women and girls gain equity in all areas of life.

Contact Lynda Buehring,  
goldracket@aol.com  
or Sandy Hays,  
sanhaydaisy@gmail.com



### ***Spread some sunshine!***

Do you know an AAUW member who is ailing or has suffered a loss? If so, please email our Sunshine Lady, Suzanne Thorp, who will mail a card from our branch.  
[sthorp5@comcast.net](mailto:sthorp5@comcast.net)

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