

Merry Christmas

Happy New Year

Happy Kwanzaa

Feliz Navidad

HAPPY HANUKKAH



Whatcom Branch

It's a ***Festive*** *on*
Holiday **Friday, December 13, 2024**
Party! **4:00 to 7:00 pm**
 at the home of
Uzma Ahmad & Sabah Randhawa
4105 Wildwood Drive

Dinner, dessert, and drinks
will be served as AAUW Whatcom Branch celebrates
our leaders, our mission, and our friendships together.

RSVP by December 7
Carolyn Kinne crkbeach@yahoo.com

See inside:

The Christmas birdhouse project

Scholarships

New Members

A look back at the November meeting

December calendar:

Dec. 5 AAUW Book Club, 12:30 p.m. at Affinity Apartments Library, 3930 Affinity Lane. Book is *The Counterfeit Countess*. (Combined Nov/Dec meeting.)

Dec. 13 Holiday party



“Deck the Old City Hall’ event: Counterclockwise from left, AAUW elves Katie Calhoun, Kay Davin and Kathy Jenkis decorate a tree at the Old City Hall Museum, with birdhouses painted by Whatcom Branch members. Tree viewing will be open during regular museum hours (Wednesday through Sunday, noon-5pm) for free (with donations welcome) from Friday, November 29th, through Sunday, January 5th, with special holiday crafting activities and music offered on weekends. Check the museum website for exact dates and times of activities. Bring your friends and families to come visit and see a veritable forest of holiday trees! *(Photo courtesy of Judy Fruhbauer)*



How the birdhouses came to be

More than a year or so ago, a group of friends got together to paint birdhouses with no idea of what we would do with them.—Just a fun get together that happened several times. The last time they met, someone asked me whether AAUW would be having a tree at the museum rotunda this year. (I had been the "coordinator" for the two times we have participated in the past.)

I contacted the woman in charge and she responded that yes, there was a tree available to decorate.

The painters looked at what they had and decided they would still need more painters, and AAUW members responded!

—Esther Golde



What's next for the birdhouses? We may auction them off at a future meeting, with proceeds going towards scholarships.

(Photos courtesy of Judy Fruhbauer)

College Relations/Scholarship Committee Report

I received the **Western Washington Stewardship Report for 2024** and with it the letters of thanks from four students awarded scholarship monies from the AAUW Endowment fund at WWU. The Endowment fund was started in the 1990s and when the amount in the fund reached a certain point, the AAUW scholarship award amount was given from WWU's investment distribution. The scholarship amount varies each year. The distribution amount given for 2024 was \$4,239.00. It was divided among four students mentioned below.

Years ago, the Branch contributed to the WWU Endowment Fund by individual members on their own, or by stating an amount on the annual renewal form and from annual fundraisers by the Branch (mainly a Used Book Sale event). When the Endowment amount reached over \$50,000 (I think), the AAUW scholarship was awarded from the interest earned on the Endowment. The annual performance for our investment has been good for many years.

When our Branch decided to offer scholarships to Whatcom Community College, Bellingham Technical College and Northwest Indian College, the Branch's contribution to the AAUW's Endowment Fund stopped but individuals were encouraged to donate. Branch fundraisers were then directed to the other three institutions instead of WWU. Fundraising since Covid has been poor and the AAUW Board is hoping to get membership interested in INVOLVEMENT in fundraising projects. Please let me and any board member know of ideas for fundraising .

The following students are all freshman at WWU and their letters exude the gratitude for their scholarships. They are excited and happy to be at WWU because of the many opportunities WWU has for their educational and personal growth.

Charlotte Callanan states she is an aspiring UX/UI designer and is working toward a computer science degree.

Cece Jones states she has always been interested in STEM fields, especially math, but she admits to "being all over the place with her other interests such as art and music and outer space"!

Algen Torres states her high school involvement with the Robotics Club cemented her love of STEM fields. She hopes to obtain degrees in electrical engineering and computer science engineering.

Malia Velasquez states, "As a woman of color I know I will succeed in the male dominated field of chemistry, because WWU provides opportunities and support for all students regardless of race or gender."



Submitted by Carol Simmer, College Relations/ Scholarship Coordinator



A warm welcome to five new members

Joining our crew of community-minded members are:

- Emilie Funston**
- Dr. Sue Guenter Schlesinger**
- Diane Norman**
- Bette Ann Schwede**
- Mary VanderPol**

We hope you will find new friends and new activities with our group.

AAUW Book Club

The combined November/December meeting will be held Dec. 5, 12:30 p.m. at Affinity Apartments Library, 3930 Affinity Lane. Guests are always welcome!

The book for discussion is *The Counterfeit Countess*, by Elizabeth White and Joanna Sliwa.

In November, we learned how to rap!

by Gwen Parker, newsletter editor

More importantly, those attending the monthly meeting learned how music can improve lives and health. Our speaker, Gayle Cloud, MT-BC, is the director and founder of Cloud Music Therapy and a board-certified music therapist and trained neurologic music therapist. She lives in Bellingham and serves Whatcom County.

Gayle spoke about how music can lift the spirits of those with health problems, and can prompt people to get up and move.



Music Therapist Gayle Cloud, left, is welcomed by Branch Co-President Uzma Ahmad.

To prove her point, she divided us into small groups and asked that we collaborate to quickly write, and then perform, a rap.

I won't lie: There were more giggles than great art, but the exercise did prove that music raises the spirits!



Michelle Harmeier, right, reads one group's rap while theater members dance to the rhythm.



A tradition continues....

A tradition was started several years ago that honors the bond between Whatcom AAUW and the White Rock/ Surrey chapter of CFUW, the Canadian Federation of University Women. Our own Margo Hammond etched the crystal pitcher seen at left with each group’s insignia, and now, whenever one chapter visits the other, the pitcher changes hands. We received it from our Canadian visitors at the November meeting in the Old City Hall Museum Rotunda Room.



CFUW visitors Ann Marie Stenge, left, and Helen Christiansen join Esther Golde and Carol Simmer to pass along the “traveling pitcher”.

Looking forward...

Before you know it, it will be time to elect new Branch officers. Generally, this takes place at the March meeting. Board Positions that will need filled for the July 1, 2025- Jun 30, 2027 years
 President
 Programs
 Secretary

—Please think about filling an office!

Dear Members of the Whatcom Branch of The American Association of University Women,

As we approach this festive season, I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt wishes to each of you. May this holiday season bring you peace, joy, and cherished moments with loved ones.

Your dedication to empowering women and girls, fostering equality, and creating a community of lifelong learners continues to inspire and uplift us all. Thank you for your continued commitment to making a positive difference in the world.

Looking ahead to the new year, I am excited about the opportunities that await our local membership. Together, we will continue to build a strong, supportive network, create meaningful programs, and make lasting impacts within our community. The strength and passion of each of you is what makes our group so special, and I am confident that 2025 will bring new accomplishments and moments of shared success.

Here’s to a wonderful holiday season and a New Year filled with hope, success, and meaningful connections. Let’s continue to support one another in our shared mission, and may the year ahead be full of growth and progress.

Warmest wishes and Happy Holidays,
Judi Edwards, CCP, MBA
 Whatcom Branch Co-President



Welcome to AAUW

How to join or renew

AAUW Whatcom Membership Renewal or joining as a new member is easily done online at <https://www.aauw.org/membership> or mail a check to:

AAUW Whatcom Treasurer
PO Box 29862
Bellingham, WA. 98228

Regular Membership: \$93.00
Other Membership:
Event Special: \$57.00
Friend of AAUW: \$10.00
College Students: \$18.81

Contact Lynda Buehring,
goldracket@aol.com
or
Carol Simmer
carollsimmer@gmail.com

Bellingham Branch AAUW

P.O. Box 29862 Bellingham, WA 98228
<https://bellingham-wa.aauw.net/>

Executive Board 2024-25

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Secretary

George Edwards

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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

IT Specialist

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