

Hooray! A semi-permanent home for AAUW meetings!

AAUW Whatcom members have felt a little like nomads, as we have used a variety of venues for our monthly meetings over the past year. Our next six meetings (excepting our December holiday party) will be held at Bellingham Golf and Country Club. Thanks to Program Chair Cathie Oberg for arranging this!



Our October 11th meeting will be held on the second floor of BG&CC, 3729 Meridian Street, beginning at 10 a.m. with coffee, tea, sweet rolls and muffins being served.

A \$5.00 charge will be collected from everyone to help defray costs.

Let's make this a high-turnout event! Bring a friend!

After the program, AAUW members and friends who want more time to visit may buy lunch from a soup and sandwich buffet set up just for us. Cost has not been totally figured yet, but will be about \$15, plus 20% tip.

Our speaker will be Branch President Judi

Edwards, CCP, MBA. She knows us all well enough to realize that few of us are computer whizzes like her. She'll keep it understandable as she presents an in-depth review of AI (Artificial Intelligence), a bit of its history and evolution, uses, advantages and dangers.

AI refers to computer systems that can perform tasks typically associated with human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making. It encompasses a variety of technologies, including machine learning and natural language processing, which enable machines to analyze data and improve their performance over time.

Judi retired after 50 years in Information Technology, working as a software engineer and at the management level. She has seen the evolution of this technology first hand.



Judi Edwards, CCP, MBA

A vision of their future selves?

Tech Trek campers hear from local woman scientist at the September AAUW meeting

Amy Hanlon, Director of Technology Outreach for SPIE, began her talk to this year's local Tech Trek science campers with a photo of her first science job locale: a small, isolated encampment on an Alaskan ice field. She was just a high-schooler when she got the chance to work on the Juneau Icefield Project: three months of scientific study on a glacier. Getting to the base was via cross-country skis — her first time using them! Her next adventure would be at the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute in Florida, where scientists were using a deep-sea submersible to collect samples of a giant orange sponge - which turned out to be useful in the treatment of cancer. As an undergraduate, she worked on LED technology - and hence, her affiliation with SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics. She holds Masters Degrees in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Stanford, 2014; Chemistry, MIT, 2006, and Materials Science, UC Santa Barbara, 2004. Serving a global membership of over 25,000, SPIE brings together engineers, scientists, students and business professionals to advance light-based science and technology.



AAUW member and former SPIE employee, Elsie Hemrick, left, introduces guest speaker Amy Hanlon, of SPIE. The local SPIE office has generously donated Tech Trek camper scholarships for the past several years, and we are delighted to honor them for their support.



Party food: AAUW members don't skimp when it comes to bringing treats for a special event!



The day begins: AAUW member Setsuko Buckley checks in for the meeting, as a Tech Trek family is greeted, behind her.



Long-time pals: Will Middlebrooks, a teacher at Shuksan Middle School and Tech Trek supporter, greets our Tech Trek Committee Chair Pam Sankey.



Trekker Aubrey Briggs-Bauer, Shuksan MS, holds a SPIE handout on optics.



Just for fun: Trekkers Raya Paci-Green and Jayna Perez smile over little grab-bag gifts. Raya attended Whatcom Middle School, and Jayna, Fairhaven MS.

A lesson from Judi

The following email was received by one of our members. It is a scam but at first thought it seems real. Using my name, I will point out how to recognize the nasties and protect yourselves.

This was the email as received. It is meant to get a response from you but look carefully at it. Is it real?

On Sep 29, 2025, at 10:18 AM, Judi Edwards <president@brainerd.net> wrote:

Hello XXXXXX,

Are you available to assist? I've got **credence in** you to handle an important task. Bellingham Branch AAUW need some gift card donation to Veterans at Hospice, disabled and palliative care units. I am liable for reimbursement. Need more info?

Respectfully,

Judi Edwards
President
Bellingham Branch AAUW

Look at the items in red. Not my email address; poor English language usage, my signature is incomplete, and we are not Bellingham - we are Whatcom Branch.

This scam was responded to for more information. Look carefully at the following. Again, not my email address and the reply-to is to a different email address yet again. The set of instructions that were sent back were clearly not in good English form.

From: Judi Edwards <president@brainerd.net>

Date: September 29, 2025 at 1:27:35 PM PDT

To: xxxxxxxx

Subject: Bellingham Branch AAUW

Reply-To: dgkofo@outlook.com

So general guidelines:

- Check email addresses
- Check language usage
- Ask, is this normal procedure
- If in doubt contact the person who sent the email in a new email with known address
- Never respond to or click on any links in a suspect email

Judi Edwards, CCP, MBA

NEW SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE PROPOSED

by Carol Simmer

Scholarship/College Relations chair

AAUW Whatcom needs a new plan if we are going to continue funding scholarships for Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College and Whatcom Community College at the current level of \$1000 apiece per year.

This year I have been asked by the schools to increase our scholarship amount if possible. The risk of losing all or a portion of federal funds is fueling this request. Our treasury cannot sustain our current gifts, without some successful fund-raiser activities. Part of the problem is that we do not yet have our 501c3 status. That may take another year working through bureaucracy!

Please consider participating in an independent committee focusing only on fund raising for scholarships! All are welcome, even if only to text me a good idea . We will meet sometime between October 20th and 28th. Time and place TBD. Let me know by text or email if you are interested.

Thank you,
Carol Simmer
(360) 961 4519
carollsimmer@gmail.com

Whatcom AAUW members attend state meeting

Judi and George Edwards, Susan Moen and Carol Simmer attended the AAUW state meeting September 6 in Toppenish. The event was held at Heritage University, which is on the Yakama Reservation.

Judi reports that she was very impressed by the private university, which was founded as Heritage College in 1982 in Toppenish, by Sister Kathleen Ross, SNJM, and two Yakama Nation women, Violet Lumley Rau and Martha B. Yallup. Its goal is the provision of accessible higher education to the multicultural population of the Yakima Valley. The university grew from the programs of the former Fort Wright College.

Book Club news

The AAUW Book Club will meet Oct. 23, 12:30 p.m. at Affinity Apartments Library, 3930 Affinity Lane. *Guests are welcome, encouraged, and maybe even arm-twisted! We need more readers!*

October 23

Trick Mirror, by Jia Tolentino

NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY AND *HARVARD CRIMSON*

Jia Tolentino is a peerless voice of her generation, tackling the conflicts, contradictions, and sea changes that define us and our time. Now, in this dazzling collection of nine entirely original essays, she delves into the forces that warp our vision, sharing her thoughts about a troubling history and the ritual humiliations and joys that characterize so much of Southern life.

December 4 (combined November/December meeting)

The Berry Pickers, by Amanda Peters

Named a Best Book of the Year by Barnes & Noble, *The New Yorker*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Good Housekeeping*, *CrimeReads*, *Booklist* and more

"A harrowing tale of Indigenous family separation.. takes on the monumental task of giving witness to p who suffered through racist attempts of erasure.

Contact: Gwen Parker, 360-224-6027,
parker.gwen@comcast.net



We've earned a couple stars!

AAUW has a Five Star Program designed to help branches align with AAUW's strategic priorities and advance our mission of achieving gender equity for women and girls. By participating in this program, your branch contributes to a strong network of advocates, elevating both your local impact and our collective efforts nationwide. Check the national AAUW website for more information on this program. Several years ago, our branch earned five stars, and this year we have earned two. Ask Judi Edwards for more information.



Paying it forward: Not long ago, I saw a bumper sticker that listed three phrases to live by. Darned if I can remember two of them, but the one that stuck in my head was “*Be Kind.*” Someone else in our community may have seen that, also - here’s the story: After our September AAUW meeting, several of us went across the street for lunch, to Luna’s Bistro. We had good food and good conversations, and as we began to get ready to leave, the waitress informed us that someone had already paid for all our lunches! We were gobsmacked, to use an English phrase. Even though we were a lighthearted group already, that act of kindness added an extra lift to our steps. Thank you, Kind Person! We take this as a reminder to continue to “Pay it forward!”

—Gwen Parker

Happy October Birthday!

Louise Bjornson 16th
Maggie Moore 20th



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: \$95.00
Other Membership:
Event Special: \$57.00
Friend of AAUW: \$10.00
College Students: \$18.81

Contact:
Carol Simmer
carollsimmer@gmail.com



Spread some sunshine!

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

Next Executive Board meeting will be at 9 a.m., October. 25, via Zoom. All members are welcome to "Zoom in."

Whatcom Branch AAUW

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