

ADVOCATE

Together Making a Difference!

January 2025



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THE BUFFALO BRANCH ADVOCATE is published monthly, September to June, as a bulletin of events for members and as an update on AAUW issues and programs.

The opinions expressed within the newsletter are those of the individual writers and may or may not reflect those of the Branch.

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Circulation 150

Submit articles to the editor via email by January 10 to:

newsletter@AAUWBuffalo.org

“NEW ADVANCEMENTS IN ALZHEIMER’S AND DEMENTIA RESEARCH”

ANDREA KOCH, MA

— TUESDAY, JAN 14, 7 PM, ZOOM —

Register for the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAscOGvqjgoHtWR3V70TLmQMdJLbMiSvs3K>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Attendance is limited, so please register now. There is no cost.



We’ve witnessed remarkable breakthroughs in Alzheimer’s and dementia research in the past 5 years that have revolutionized how we understand, diagnose, and treat these conditions. We’ll review some of these discoveries as well as others on the horizon. We’ll also discuss free resources for families currently facing Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias.

Andrea is the Director of Community Engagement at the Alzheimer’s Association, WNY Chapter, where she’s worked for 8 years. Andrea holds a Master’s degree in Art Therapy and worked in long-term care in Chicago for about 10 years before returning home to Buffalo. She’s passionate about creative engagement with older adults and supporting and connecting caregivers facing dementia.

Personal note from the editor— does this topic interest you as much as it does me? There’s a history of dementia in my family and I really hope to avoid what I saw of it in my mom. See you on the screen for this important program!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Lilyen Mascellino

Happy New Year to All!

As you know, the fiscal year for our Branch begins each September. It's our opportunity for a fresh start, but for many of us, January also represents a new beginning. With the New Year comes a revival of setting future goals. This year is not an exception. 2024 was a year of many wins for the Buffalo Branch & we look forward to the bright future that 2025 promises.

By now you know that I believe we shine brightest when we work collaboratively & lift each other up. Our Branch is living proof of that. And because of this collaborative spirit, we have experienced many successes since September. Here are the highlights:

- Board members worked together with me to revise & update Board Job Descriptions. This proved to be insightful for all & ensures that our work remains relevant.
- The Program Committee has planned high interest programs for members & interested community members each month. These programs are aligned with AAUW's mission & the feedback has been positive. Monthly programs have also been successful in recruiting new members this year! So please take advantage of these events & bring a friend!
- Our Membership Recruitment VP continues to collaborate with the PR Committee to ensure that recruitment materials remain professional & current.
- Collaboration between our Scholarship Director & our CFO has led to a very important decision. This year we will be increasing the amount awarded in scholarships, thus causing us to make an even greater impact on young people in our communities!
- The PR Committee has had a major impact on our visibility throughout WNY. Relationships within the community have been cultivated & we have reaped the rewards. "Bee" Newspaper articles have brought in new members via monthly program announcements & Book Sale articles.
- Our CFO continues to work closely with our financial institution, as well as with our other treasurers to help ensure the financial stability of the Branch. This is a major responsibility. Kudos to our CFO & the treasurers she works with.
- The work of our Branch Treasurer has made it possible for everyone to pay for Programs electronically starting with December's Program. This convenience is optional, of course.
- The Book Sale Committee is working on our 69th Annual Scholarship Book Sale. This year they added the 1st Saturday of each month to their book collection schedule & they need your help! To get in on the fun, contact a member of the Book Sale Committee. You will be happy you made the leap! These volunteers, like all of our volunteers are the backbone of our Branch.
- We have grown our social media presence to over 1000 Followers & those who follow us share the info posted with all of their friends! This helps keep the community updated on programs, scholarships & the Book Sale.

Thank you for being a member of the Buffalo Branch! If you'd like to get involved with committee work, please reach out to any Board member!

With enthusiastic members side by side, we will thrive in 2025!

PRESIDENT
Lilyen Mascellino

VP PROGRAM
Dr. Marian Deutschman

VP MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT
Diane O'Brien

VP MEMBERSHIP RETENTION
Dr. Susan McClary

SECRETARY/PARLIAMENTARIAN
Judy Huber

CFO
Shirley Joy

BRANCH TREASURER
Mary Crocker

EAP TREASURER
Ruby Williams

FUNDRAISING TREASURER
Jennifer Hoffman

**CHAMBERLIN/FUNDS FOR
EDUCATION TREASURER**
Kathleen SantaMaria

SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTOR
Melissa White

WE HAVE A JOB TO DO!

Dr. Marian Deutschman, Public Policy Chair

According to data from the National Literacy Institute, “Illiteracy has become such a serious problem in our country that 130 million adults are now unable to read a simple story to their children.” The Institute has gathered shocking statistics that impact the nation, our economy, our society, and the classroom. The literacy rate is defined by the percentage of the population of a given age group that can read and write, usually demonstrated with the ability to understand a simple statement about their daily lives. Twenty percent of Americans read below the level needed to earn a living wage. Three out of four people on welfare can’t read. Three out of five people in prisons can’t read. Fifty-four percent of adults have a literacy level below 6th grade. The Institute’s list goes on and on. How do these statistics influence our democracy?

A citizen is a participatory member of a political community. Citizenship is gained by meeting the legal requirements of a national, state, or local government. A nation grants certain rights and privileges to its citizens. In return, citizens are expected to obey their country’s laws and defend it against its enemies. Our expectation for citizens, and especially voters in our highly polarized society, is the ability to practice critical thinking. Otherwise they become vulnerable receivers of dishonesty, misinformation and disinformation. Critical thinking involves analyzing information and making judgments based on what you read, see or hear. Some of the critical thinking skills that we need include problem-solving, inference, evaluation, and self-regulation. Can you define a problem, identify its cause and visualize a solution? If not, why not? Are you able to draw a logical conclusion based on an analysis of facts, ideas and events? Do you question conclusions and consider other possibilities? Are you aware of how biases impact the process? Do you understand the basics of how government works?

According to the Pew Research Center, “Americans’ knowledge of their government varies widely by topic.” Their research indicates that “majorities are aware of the length of Supreme Court appointments, how states’ representation in the House of Representatives is determined, which parties control the House and Senate, and at least one of the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment. Fewer Americans correctly answer questions about the filibuster, the length of a Senate term and how a presidential election is decided in the event of a tie in the Electoral College.” Republicans and Democrats perform equally well on these quiz questions. Older Americans are generally more likely than younger adults to answer the questions correctly. For instance, 88% of adults

ages 65 and older know the length of a Supreme Court appointment, compared with 62% of those ages 18 to 29. However, older adults are somewhat *less* likely than younger adults to correctly answer questions about First Amendment rights, and the tiebreaker for the Electoral College.

Billionaire CEO Elon Musk and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, former Republican presidential candidate and co-founder of Strive Asset Management, will lead a new department of government efficiency (DOGE) in the second Trump administration. DOGE is not intended to function as a federal executive department, the creation of which would require the approval of the U.S. Congress; instead, it will serve as an advisory body making recommendations on streamlining the U.S. federal government and reducing inefficiency. Together, they “will pave the way for my administration to dismantle government bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures, and restructure federal agencies,” Trump said in a statement. As citizens, shouldn’t we have an opinion on this initiative? As a critical thinker, use your analytical skills.

A citizen, who is a retired Oilfield Specialist, commented online: “The US governmental system is messy! Dictators have the advantage of making an “instant” decision, but it may be ultimately very wrong for the population.” He added that “Dictators, authoritarians and monarchies have a much easier time when their subjects are essentially enslaved to a single individual or small elite group or aristocracy that makes all the decisions for them! Here there are a hundred differing opinions that come up in our deliberations at every level, but usually there is one that is brilliant from a “nobody” and almost everyone understands that solution is the better choice, and so we go with that one. Our American process is much slower and sometimes very frustrating getting to an agreed solution, but since it was a group effort we have more force behind the decision and can adapt as we go!”

As a critical thinking citizen, you should demand transparency of this DOGE process and its goals. *Musk* wants to slash government spending by a third, and *Ramaswamy* wants to cut 75% of the federal workforce. They also want to permanently end daylight saving time. As responsible citizens and critical thinkers, we need to pay close attention to what they are planning to do. You have a voice. You and your organizations have the power of numbers. Now you need a strategy to make your voice heard and to make a real difference.

JANUARY 2025 INTEREST GROUPS

DINNER BY THE BOOK

When: Wed., Jan 15 at 5:30 pm

Where: Family Tree Restaurant, 4346 Bailey Ave.

Book: *After Annie* by Anna Quindlen

Facilitator: Susan McClary

Discussion Leader: Mary Crocker

RSVP: Judy Malamas at 716-632-0461

or tsagewood@aol.com

LET'S TALK ABOUT PUBLIC POLICY!

When: Wed, Jan 29 at 1 pm.

Where: Second floor of Dash's, 1770 Hertel Ave. Feel free to bring a lunch or purchase food there.

JOIN the LWVBN (League of Women Voters Buffalo/

Niagara) Public Policy group meeting and see if we can

work together on the issues of importance to both organizations.

Call Marian Deutschman (716-634-2412) if you're interested AND send her any articles you've seen that you'd like to discuss so they can be sent to the other participants.

(mardeu15@verizon.net)

CLUELESS MYSTERY BOOK CLUB

When: Wed., Jan 22 at noon

Where: Family Tree Restaurant, 4346 Bailey Ave.

Book: *The Perfect Couple* by Elin Hilderbrand

Discussion Leader - Eleanor Scaffidi

RSVP: Barbara Libby at 716-836-8303

or bplibby1@verizon.net

THE HAPPY WANDERERS

Let's skip the snowy, blowy, slippery road months!

Think ahead and contact Judy Huber (716-529-9881 or judyhuber62@yahoo.com) with suggestions!

WESTERN NEW YORK CULINARY DELIGHTS

Culinary Delights will have a lunch meeting in February. If you are interested, please email me.

Barb Libby bplibby1@verizon.net

Important for our Members!

ROSTER CORRECTIONS

New member **Dr. Deborah J. Robinson's** listing in the roster had several errors—our apologies! Please note:

- The "title" line should read "Robinson, Dr. Deborah J."
- Her degree from Canisius University was a BA, not a BS.
- Her MS from Buff State was in Student Personnel Administration, not Personal

Nan Scinta has moved—Her new address is 5861 Goodrich Road #7C, Clarence Center, NY 14032.
518-683-1034, nscinta@roadrunner.com.

NOMINATIONS FOR 2025-27 BOARD POSITIONS ARE NEEDED!

We will be voting on & electing people to the following offices in the spring of 2025:

- ☞ President
- ☞ VP Programs
- ☞ VP Membership Retention
- ☞ Branch (Operations) Treasurer
- ☞ Chamberlin/Funds for Education Treasurer

Please contact Lilyen Mascellino via email as soon as possible if you are interested in serving in one of these positions or have a suggestion. Her email can be found in your Branch Roster.

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President: Lilyen Mascellino
Publisher/Editor: Betty Preble
Assistant Editors:

Judy Weidemann
Karen May
Barbara Carier
Julie Wrisley

For prospective or new member questions, please contact:

Membership Recruitment VP:
Diane O'Brien,
recruitment@aauwbuffalo.org

Send address changes to:

Mary Crocker
375 Parkhurst Blvd.
Buffalo, NY 14223
mlcrocker@msn.com

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Virginia Polk-Golden

310 Northumberland Ave. Buffalo NY
14215

Phone: 716-893-0546

Email: goldenvirinia328@gmail.com

BA Sociology University of Buffalo

Director of Rehab Services YWCA

North St. Buffalo NY

Kathy Walker

P.O. Box 366 Falconer NY14733

Phone: 716-720-7711

Email: walkerKath52@gmail.com

A.A. Criminal Justice Jamestown Community College

BS Criminal Justice Buffalo State University

MS Criminal Justice (Not Completed)

Buff. State University

Retired Vice President 3rd Generation

Industrial Supply Family Business,
Jamestown NY

Karen Plowe

133 Bauman Road Williamsville NY
14221

Phone: 716-352-1904

Email: kmplove@yahoo.com

BS Marketing Univ. of MN

Retired Compliance Director

Amy Brombos

54 North Shore Dr. Alden NY 14004

Phone: 716-425-6354

Email: Abrombos31@gmail.com

JoAnn Mecca

68 Richmond Ave. Buffalo NY 14222

Phone: 716-884-5312

BA + 50 hours D'Youville College

Retired BPS

Mary Ann Coulson

PO Box 904 Niagara Falls NY 14302

Phone: 905-246-9162

Email: macdcc20@gmail.com

BS Mathematics Education, North

Carolina State University

Retired, Finance Career

"THE CAREER ADVICE YOU'RE STILL NOT GETTING"



Looking ahead to next month (Feb 20 at 6pm on Zoom), think about the advice you've gotten—and not gotten — throughout your life. If turning the key to unlock career success is on your agenda for 2025, or if you mentor or manage women for whom this is a goal, join us for a discussion about "The Missing 33%" led by Internationally known expert in women's leadership development and gender dynamics **Susan Colantuono**.

Registration for the Zoom session is now open: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ldu-ugz4jHN0zCmQTIHK-zmL-xfMhVtqt> . Program chair Keola has also arranged for a room at the Williamsville Branch Library for those who do not have Zoom capability. Space is limited, so email Keola at worldtribednm@gmail.com if you are interested.

BOOK SALE THOUGHTS!

Are YOU ready for our Book Sale? Be sure to save room on your calendars for working before, during, and right after the sale!

We will be seriously looking for a sale site starting right after the holidays. (Remember to email "booksale@aauwbuffalo.org" if you spot a possibility!). Once we have one secured, the real fun begins!

There will be hundreds of hours of work during the March-May setup, the May 28-June 1 sale, and the cleanup June 2 through June 20. Much of it is , to be honest, hard work—but during the sale there are plenty of opportunities for those with limited physical capabilities.

If you can't help in person, perhaps you could contribute towards our expenses? We recognize several levels of support—see our [website book sale page](#) for guidance.



Carol Griffith



Margaret Allen



Lee Coppola



Pat Miceli

For those of you who found their way to the Northwest Amherst Community Center for our program on November 14, you heard some excellent questions from attendees and answers from journalism pros Bob McCarthy and Lee Coppola. The comments from attendees on their evaluations included the following: *timely, wonderful discussion, good insights, therapeutic, excellent opportunity to relieve some of our tension, confirmed my fears, lots of ideas, and excellent experience.*



Susan McClary



Mary Bashore



Maryann Hope



Caren Shapiro



Stacey Johnson



Lisa Casey



Robert J. McCarthy



Ladies getting checked in...



Barbara Carier

The speakers pointed out that journalism will have to become even more of a watchdog in view of the lack of customary oversight by the branches of government. Each branch should provide checks and balances on the other branches. Journalism, the so-called Fourth Estate or fourth power, refers to the press and news media in their explicit capacity of reporting the News without advocacy nor framing political issues. Threats to democracy in the world are real and growing. With the decline of newspapers, social media and podcasts are filling the gap but they are known to include misinformation and disinformation. Journalists need to uncover the facts for the public that often seeks out sources of information that only confirm their worldview. One of our members shared her experience as a poll-worker. She said that some voters had to redo their ballot several times because they did not, or could not, read the instructions. When the woman voter was asked if she knew who to vote for, she said her husband tells her that!

DATES TO REMEMBER

JANUARY

Wednesday, Jan 8, 6:30pm, Board Meeting, Ebenezer United Church of Christ in West Seneca

Tuesday, Jan 14, 7:00pm, Branch Program pm Zoom. See page 1.

“New Advancements in Alzheimer’s and Dementia Research”

FEBRUARY

Wednesday, Feb 5, 6:30pm, Board Meeting, Christ United Methodist Church in Snyder

Thursday, Feb 20, 6:00pm, Branch Program on Zoom. Susan Colatuono
“The Career Advice You’re STILL Not Getting!” Se page 5.

May 28 - June 1, 2025 — 69th BOOK SALE Location TBD

Please note: All events are possibly subject to change or cancellation. Please check our website for last minute information.



AAUW

AAUW has been empowering women as individuals and as a community since 1881. For over 140 years, we have worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families.

Mission: *Gender Equity & Economic Security*

Vision: *Equity for all*

Values : *Intersectional. Inclusive. Intergenerational. Empowering.*

In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

Moving? Please contact Mary Crocker 716-838-2796



Return Service Requested

American Association of
University Women
Buffalo Branch Inc
PO BOX 894
Buffalo, NY 14225-0894

