Advocate

Together Making a Difference…

DECEMBER 2026



In This Issue:

December Program –"Mystery Dinner"	2
January Program –"Blizzard of '77"	3
Public Policy	4
President's Message	5
Achievement Award Program	6
Membership	6
In Memory of Diane Silvestro	6
Book Sale	7
Special Interest Groups	8-9
Dates to Remember	10

JANUARY ADVOCATE

The deadline for each issue of the Advocate is the 5th of the previous month. Please submit articles to the editor via email by December 5, 2026 to:

newsletter@ AAUWBuffalo.org

AAUW Buffalo (NY) Branch

DECEMBER'S PROGRAM

Please join us on

Tuesday, December 8, 2026, 6:00 PM

at BANCHETTI'S RESTAURANT
550 North French Road, Amherst, NY 14228



MYSTERY DINNER



Interactive Mystery Dinner
Everyone at your table will
play a character
& work together to solve a crime!
No acting experience needed!
You'll follow your character's script
& enjoy the fun!
Come with friends or meet new
ones, as you discover whodunit!

Dinner Choices: Choose one
Stuffed Boneless Pork Chops
Chicken Piccata
(Dairy-free, Nut-free, Shellfish-free)
Eggplant Zucchini Parmigiana Lasagna
(Ricotta, Sauce – Vegetarian, Gluten-free)

Please register on or before Thursday, December 3

Registration: Click Here to register online and pay $36 per person via Credit Card or mail the completed form below (include all names with meal choices and allergies of those in your group - name tags), along with a check for $36 per person to: AAUW Buffalo, PO Box 894, Buffalo, NY 14225

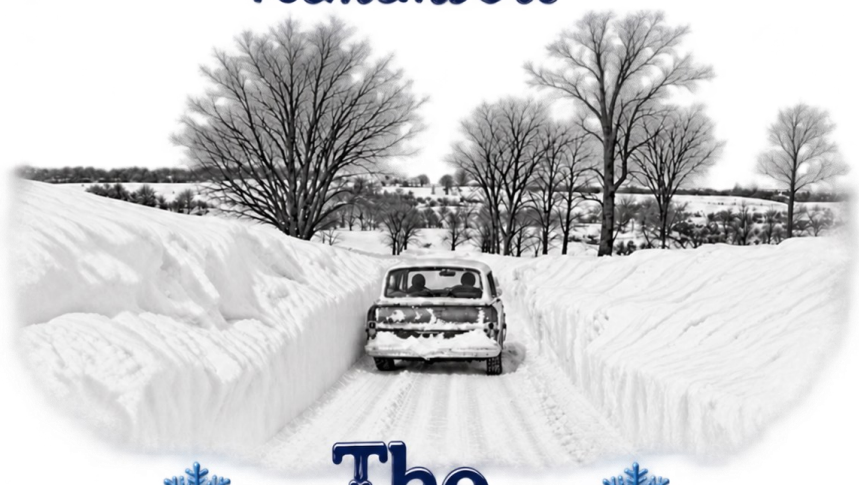
Name: _____

Phone No.: _____ Email: _____

If interested in carpooling, please indicate your area (O.P., Williamsville, Amherst, etc.)

_____

AAUW Buffalo Branch Remembers



The Blizzard of '77

With Meteorologist Don Paul

Please join us on
Saturday, January 9, 2027, 1:30 PM
at Audubon/Honorable Shirley Chisholm Library
350 James Audubon Parkway, Amherst, NY 14228

Light Refreshments Served
Program is Free!

Please register on or before Saturday, January 2, 2027

Registration: Click Here to register online or mail the completed form below to: AAUW Buffalo, PO Box 894, Buffalo, NY 14225

Name: _____

Phone No.: _____ Email: _____

If interested in carpooling, please indicate your area (O.P., Williamsville, Amherst, etc.)

_____

Public Policy

Dr. Marian Deutschman, Public Policy Chair

PUBLIC TRUST

In recent research on public trust in government, the Partnership for Public Service found that just 27% of Americans said they trust the federal government, down six percentage points as compared to last year at this time.

Now that we've expressed our opinion on candidates (and issues) in the midterm elections, did our vote represent our level of trust in government to tell the truth and act on its promises to us and other citizens in the United States? Since the Citizens United campaign finance ruling by the U. S. Supreme Court in 2010, massive, unlimited amounts of political spending have been enabled to come from corporations, wealthy donors and special interest outside groups. It fused private wealth and political power, notes the Brennan Center for Justice. Some call this "dark money" in elections. Does this spending on campaign promises reflect your primary interests?

Some 30 states have mounted a coordinated effort that could lead to another Supreme Court showdown on this issue, according to Brad Brooks at Reuters. If they succeed, Montana and Hawaii are trying to set a precedent for other states to follow. Brooks adds that "people remain deeply suspicious of money in politics." One goal is to prevent corporate money from leaving the state.

There is a law that addresses and bars federal contractors from making contributions to federal campaigns for political parties, candidates or committees. This may look like bribery. Fredreka Schouton, CNN money and politics reporter, tells us that mega-donor Elon Musk spent over $445 million on the midterm election this year, topping the $291 million he spent two years ago to help elect Republicans, including Trump. Musk is a federal contractor through SpaceX, his aerospace company. A nonprofit legal group called Democracy Defenders Action claims that Musk has won $10 billion in government contracts since he left DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency, where he ran up a bill of $517 billion and achieved minimal savings. *Money Talks News* says that DOGE might be costing Americans as much as it is saving. The United States deficit recently reached $40 trillion.

The *New York Times* reports that polls have consistently shown that the top issue for voters this year is the economy. Gen Z readers of *The Guardian* say it's ICE, inflation and Trump. Austin Denean's headline at *The National News Desk* says "More Americans feel worse off financially as voters look to Congress for help." Election results tell us who holds power but they don't tell us the next likely steps. Republicans face the prospect of losing control of Congress. What can Democrats do if they win one or both houses of Congress?

Americans were feeling more frustrated with how the Republicans were handling the economy. Democrats need a net gain of four seats in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to overturn Republicans' narrow 218-214 and 53-47 majorities. But who will address the primary interests of U.S. citizens, and how? Will those actions restore some of the trust in the federal government? *(I wrote this on election day)*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- Pat Miceli

"The Holiday Season is a perfect time to reflect on our blessings and seek ways to make life better for those around us."

- Terri Marshall

Seasons Greetings to all. May your holidays be all you hope they will be.

As one tends to do, the end of a year causes reflection. We as a Branch have many positive highlights upon which to reflect.

- Our 2026 Scholarship Book Sale was a record-breaking success. As you know, it was the Book Sale that funded the 16 AAUW Buffalo Branch Scholarships totaling $92,000 which were awarded to students in WNY.
- The Book Sale Committee under the leadership of Nancy DiStasio and member volunteers are working diligently this year to equal if not exceed last year's success.
- Our Welcome Back Dinner under the leadership of Lilyen Mascellino was well attended and well received.
- Our Membership under the leadership of Andy Smith has been steadily growing.
- Our Website under the leadership of Karen May has been updated. Please take a look. aauwbuffalo.org
- Our Board has continued to work tirelessly to oversee the workings of our Branch.
- Moreover, Our Branch received a Five-Star Rating from AAUW National. Achieving all five stars is a significant accomplishment and reflects our branch's outstanding work across every area of the program: Advancement; Public Policy & Advocacy; Governance & Sustainability; Programming; and Communications & External Relations.

Indeed, this is the time to step back and appreciate accomplishments while moving forward. Happy Holidays.

THE BUFFALO BRANCH
ADVOCATE

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.

November Vol. CXXXV, No. 4
Circulation 180

President: Pat Miceli
Publisher/Editor: Karen May
Assistant Editors: Betty Preble
Judy Weidemann

For prospective or new member questions, please contact:
Membership VP: Andy Smith
Membership@aauwbuffalo.org

Send address changes to:
Mary Crocker
375 Parkhurst Blvd.
Buffalo, NY 1422
mlcrock@msn.com

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD PROGRAM

~Pat Miceli

Since 1940, the AAUW Buffalo Branch has chosen an outstanding woman in the Buffalo/WNY area whose attainments, character, and merit recognition.

In December and January all members are invited to nominate candidates for the 2027 Achievement Award and to serve on the selection committee. If you want to be a member of the Achievement Award Selection Committee, please contact Pat Miceli 716-626-0234 (home), 716-880-0042 (cell), or pwmiceli@gmail.com.

The Achievement Award Nomination procedures and form are located on the Branch Policies and Procedures page of our website, aauwbuffalo.org (Click here to view).

If you wish to nominate someone this year, who was nominated previously but not chosen, all the information must be resubmitted.

MEMBERSHIP

-Andy Smith

A warm and friendly welcome to our

New Member

Joseph Thomas, MD

New and Current Members, you might enjoy the presentations I made and may even learn something new.

Membership Social Presentation

History & Photo from Membership Social

IN MEMORY OF DIANE SILVESTRO

AAUW Buffalo thanks Lori Silvestro for her donation in memory of her mother, Diane Silvestro, who passed away in 2021. Diane cared deeply about AAUW's mission and was especially devoted to the branch's Book Sale and outreach activities. In her note to the branch, Lori recalled how much it meant to her that AAUW members attended Diane's viewing. She asked that we use her gift wherever it can best support the branch's work.

We are grateful to Lori for honoring her mother in this way, and we fondly remember all that Diane gave to AAUW Buffalo.

BOOK SALE

~Nancy DiStasio

Donations continue to arrive in great abundance. We have received many beautiful books, games and puzzles and an unusually large quantity of DVD's and CD's. Donors are also very excited about the opportunity to purge their VHS and cassette tape collections, which we are adding to the mix this year. Believe it or not, both VHS and cassette tapes have had a surge in popularity, especially with collectors and nostalgic folks.

We will continue collecting donations at our new location at 3774 Harlem Road, Cheektowaga (between Cleveland and Wehrle Drives, across from DQ) Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9 am - 1 pm and Saturdays 10 am – 1 pm.

Special thanks to all the shift supervisors and volunteers who come out each week to sort the many items received. We have hundreds of boxes sorted already! If you have NOT sorted in the past (or been recently trained) and want to help, please contact Nancy to set up a training session. We could especially use some strong people to help move boxes.

Any questions? Contact Nancy DiStasio at AauwBfloBooksale@gmail.com



The donations from Moog's recent book drive have been tallied. Their generous staff, donated 2200+ books, 100+ games/puzzles and 200+ media items. Special thanks to Moog staff members Julia Pacer, Jessica Squire and Jolene Esposito, who did an amazing job coordinating collection and drop off. We are so grateful for their hard work and kind support.

Please Note: Holiday Hours

The 3774 Harlem Road collection site will be **closed:**

Tues, Nov. 24, 2026 – Sat, Nov. 28, 2026
Sat, Dec. 20, 2026 – Sat, Jan. 2, 2027

Happy Holidays!

Please note that with winter weather coming soon, **the collection site will be closed during inclement weather**. If Cheektowaga or Cleveland Hill School districts are closed, we will be also. If the weather forecast or roads are unsafe (or are unsafe where you are located) do not come out. Safety first!!!

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

DINNER BY THE BOOK

When: Wed., December 16th, at 5:30 pm
Where: --- NEW LOCATION ---
The Olympic Restaurant
1601 Military Rd, Buffalo, NY, 14217

Book: *The Collected Regrets of Clover,* by Mikki Brammer

Discussion Leader: Nan Scinta

Facilitator: Kathy Tepas

Please RSVP each month!
RSVP: Judy Malamas 716-632-0461
Email: tsagewood@aol.com

CLUELESS MYSTERY BOOK CLUB

When: No Clueless Book Club in Nov/Dec
Next Meeting is:
Wed., January 27th, at 12:00 pm
Where: Family Tree Restaurant
4346 Bailey Avenue, Amherst

Book: *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, by Agatha Christie

Presenter: Kate Collins

RSVP: Please RSVP each month!
Barbara Libby at 716-836-8303
or bplibby1@verizon.net

SCRABBLE CLUB

No Scrabble Club in December.
Next gathering…
When: Thursday, January 14th, at 5:30pm
Where: Home of Pat Miceli

Contact Lisa Casey below for Pat's address for the next gathering.

RSVP: Lisa Casey
716-957-2136
Email: lisamcfail@gmail.com

LET'S TALK PUBLIC POLICY!

Public Policy will not meet in December. Next meeting…
When: Thursday, January 28th
1:30 pm
Where: Dash's, 1770 Hertel Ave – 2nd floor
Discussion: Current Public Policy
R.S.V.P. Marian Deutschman 716-634-2412
or mardeu15@verizon.net
Please call or email Marian to let her know you will be attending.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

WINE BY ZOOM

When: Monday, December 14th, at 7:00 pm

RSVP: Andy Smith
716-228-9540
Email: aasmith12@yahoo.com

Click Here to Join Zoom

THE HAPPY WANDERERS

Buffalo Botanical Gardens

Get in the holiday spirit in the warm Victorian glasshouses with a 30-minute mini tour of the gardens and then we can explore on our own.
https://www.buffalogardens.com/

Friday, December 4th, 2026, 1:45pm
(Tour starts promptly at 1:45pm)

2655 South Park Avenue,
Buffalo, NY 14218
Adults: $19
Seniors: $17
Garden membership: free entrance

Contact Andy Smith
716-228-9540
aasmith12@yahoo.com

LUNCH BUNCH

When: Monday, December 7th, at 11:30 pm

Where: The Nickel Plate
1500 Clinton Street, Buffalo, NY

Come sip, savor, shop, mix, and mingle with fellow members.
https://www.tnpbuffalo.com/

PLEASE RSVP IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO ATTEND!

RSVP: Andy Smith
716-228-9540
Email: aasmith12@yahoo.com

MASTERING LIBRARY ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

(Including Libby, Hoopla, Kanopy & Flipster)

Paula Salamone, a retired librarian will help one or two people at a time learn how to take advantage of all these “perks” at the library using your own mobile phone, tablet or laptop. We can meet by Zoom initially or in person

RSVP: Paula Salamone
Please call or text
716-479-1088

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

Return Service Requested



Moving? Please contact Mary Crocker 716-838-2796

DATES TO REMEMBER

11/21	Book Sale Col/Sorting 10 AM - 1 PM
	(We will be closed 11/24 through 11/28 for the Holiday)
12/1	Book Sale Col/Sorting 9 AM - 1 PM
12/2	Book Sale Col/Sorting 9 AM - 1 PM
	Board Meeting 6:30 PM (ZOOM: Click Here)
12/4	Happy Wanderers – Botanical Gardens Tour
12/5	Book Sale Col/Sorting 10 AM - 1 PM
12/7	Lunch Bunch 11:30 AM
12/8	Book Sale Col/Sorting 9 AM - 1 PM
12/9	Book Sale Col/Sorting 9 AM - 1 PM
12/12	Book Sale Col/Sorting 10 AM - 1 PM
12/14	Wine by Zoom 7 PM (ZOOM: Click Here)
12/15	Book Sale Col/Sorting 9 AM - 1 PM
12/16	Book Sale Col/Sorting 9 AM - 1 PM
	Dinner By the Book 5:00 PM
12/19	Book Sale Col/Sorting 10 AM - 1 PM
	(We will be closed on 12/22 through 1/2 for the Holiday)

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.