

the **Twig** branch newsletter – January 2, 2022

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas. Thanks so much to Julia Palmer for hosting our December Christmas celebration brunch. It was beautiful and enjoyable, as always.

Thank you also to Cindy Zahrt for the great article in the newspaper. That represented us well!

Have you started reading your book for our January meeting yet?!

We will meet on Tuesday, January 25 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Tomah Chamber of Commerce.

If everyone would bring a brief review of a book they read or a movie they watched to share with the group, that would be great. The review will need to be brief for all of us to have an opportunity to share. Please read a book about something that is in regard to empowering women or something on equity, etc. I am reading “The Moment of Lift” by Melinda Gates and it is on how empowering women changes the world. Irma from the library recommends “There is Nothing for you Here” by Fiona Hill. You can also find ideas on the AAUW website. It will be so great to hear all the different books and what other books we may want to read based on someone else’s sharing of that book.

Happy New Year and happy reading!
Tammy Hewuse,
Program Chair



A Wonderful, Festive Time!



We were fortunate to enjoy a fabulous holiday brunch on December 18th!

Along with the great fellowship and delicious food, we had a chance to hear from one of the Afghan women who has been touched by the AAUW project. Deb Thiel connected with her via cell phone. It was interesting hearing

been touched by the AAUW project. Deb Thiel connected with her via cell phone. It was interesting hearing

about her experiences in coming to the U.S. and Ft. McCoy. In fact, many did not know their destination! This included the very successful young woman leader to whom we spoke. The women are very appreciative and delighted with the gifts provided by AAUW and others.



At right, Afghan women before they departed Ft. McCoy.

We also learned from Barb Sullivan as she provided her personal story reflections. Barb has had a lifetime love of music and theatre. These continue today through the many roles she has had in the Tomah Area Community

Theatre. She first came to Tomah to stay with her grandfather. She started her education career in a convent school. Barb recalled her education career in the Tomah School District and the challenges of being in a leadership role with the teacher's union. We thank Barb for sharing her many talents with the Tomah community and with AAUW!



Branch President Deb Thiel provided this update on December 15, 2021:

I delivered 3 more bags today to make sure the departers get them

in time.

I was told over and over how happy it made them and to thank you all so much.

Now we have to catch up on the fund raising!! I hope you are sharing this story and soliciting money from everyone you know!!

I am sorry to say I am making slow progress with establishing a PayPal giving account for a Go Fund Me -- it's my first time. Forgive me!

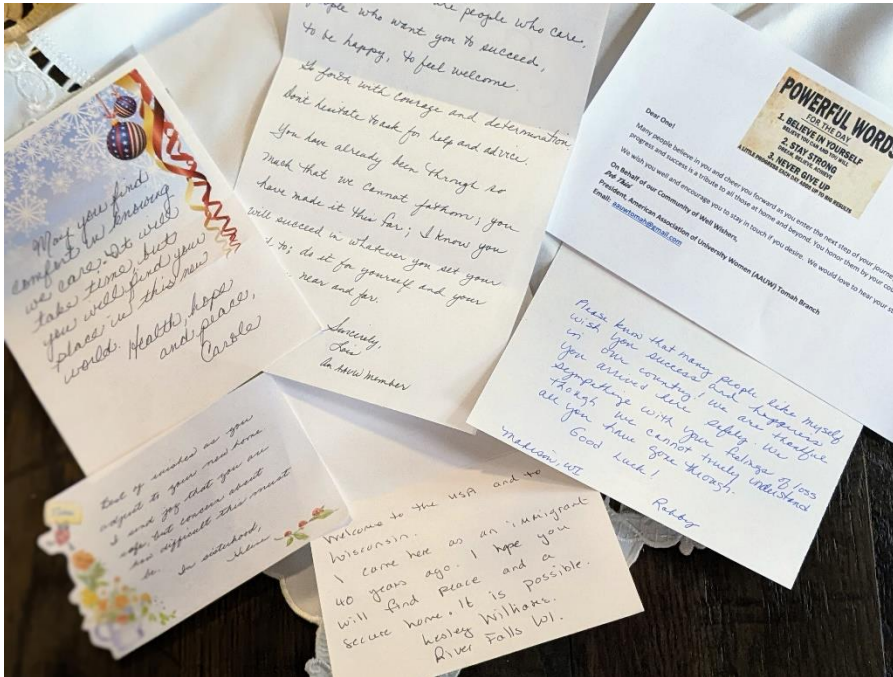
However, I think I will be able to find an electronic banking option like Venmo or other; and my goal is to have it established by COB Sunday. I'm bringing in the big guns (A Google analyst programmer and Professor) to help me with it! Failure is not an option.

I am starting to receive some emails for direction, and help on our AAUWTOMAH@gmail.com addressthese gals are the first of their nation to have received college educations or start in University. My new friend Zahra told me today that she entered a UNESCO documentary contest topic "Life in my Village". She has a degree in Economics, crossed with 2 other social majors. She chose to talk about the power within women of her Fort McCoy settlement -- she showed women crocheting and sewing which many of the women only see as a Tradition passed on to them. She points out that



these are skills they already have. These skills are transferable and will help them to be employable in their new world. She wants them to recognize their strengths and power and build upon that. She talked about how her mother's handiwork was how she could afford to send her to school. Her mother diligently saved money she made by selling her craft. Zahra is presenting virtually at the UNESCO conference within the next few weeks.

I told these gals today that they are the first to be educated. As such they are the best of the best and they must be, as



every barrier that women have conquered has been accomplished by the first bearing the brunt of it. I encouraged them to never doubt their ambition and goals, they may be unsure and weary at times but to know in their hearts they are on the right track. One can't go back, or be less to please another. We must be true to ourselves. They lap up the support of older women. It is truly beautiful. Thanks for joining in on this.

— Deb

At left: Some of the many notes to be included in the gift bags to the Afghan women.

Many thanks to Deb Young for providing our November 30th program. Sorry, I ran out of space to include the photo in the last Twig newsletter!

Just a closing thought:

“Maybe happiness didn’t have to be about the big, sweeping circumstances, about having everything in your life in place. Maybe it was about stringing together a bunch of small pleasers.”

— ANN BRASHARES (The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants)

May your 2022 be filled with abundant small pleasures!

Please send newsletter items to Bonnie Peterson, AAUW Secretary, at wordemp@centurylink.net. 608-372-7501

