



**Website** [lowerctvalley-ct.aauw.net](http://lowerctvalley-ct.aauw.net)  
**Facebook** [facebook.com/groups/460005185436947](https://facebook.com/groups/460005185436947)

**DECEMBER 2025**  
**Lower Connecticut Valley Newsletter**

### **LCV DECEMBER CALENDAR EVENTS**

(Details inside and on LCV Website Calendar)

**Tuesday, December 2**

1:00pm – LCV and ESP Board Meetings

**Wednesday, December 3**

1:00pm - Afternoon Book Group (via Zoom)

**Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**

1:00pm - Crafting

**Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**

12:30pm – Mah Jongg

**Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00 pm – LCV Meeting**

**Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**

7:00pm – Evening Book Group

**Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**

5:30pm – Foodies

**Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am – Hiking Group

**Tuesday, December 30<sup>th</sup>**

Walking Group

**NO Cultural Arts**

**NO Great Decisions**

### **LCV December Meeting**

**Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00pm**

**Saybrook Pavilion Saybrook Point  
Old Saybrook**

**Please bring your favorite holiday  
dessert to share.**

**Our speaker will be Rick Friswell, a cultural  
historian and Director of the Institute of  
Lifelong Learning at Wesleyan University. The  
topic is *Origins of Democracy – The Spark of  
Liberty*.**

**Holiday sweaters and "garb" welcome!**



### **AAUW LCV FACEBOOK PAGE**

Please check out and join our AAUW Lower Connecticut Valley Branch Facebook page with **photos of our group members at recent events and other information!**

Press Ctrl + Click on below LCV website link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/460005185436947/>

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Members!

I am happy to report that our holiday White Elephant Raffle party was a wonderful success! Thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of our members, we raised a total of \$580 for AAUW National.

I am thrilled to announce that, thanks to your incredible generosity, we have collected a remarkable assortment of toys, books, and clothing for Safe Futures of Southeastern Connecticut. In addition to these wonderful donations, our members contributed an outstanding total of **\$2,195 in gift cards**. Your contributions have far surpassed last year's efforts, and we are truly grateful for your continued support. Together, we are making a positive impact! Safe Futures has expressed their gratitude and will use our donations as Christmas gifts for families in need.

December's branch meeting, **December 11, 2025**, will have a guest speaker, Richard Friswell, from Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT.

Saturday, **January 10, 2026**, will be our annual "Tea and Trivia" event at the Vicky Duffy Pavilion, 155 College Street, Old Saybrook, CT, from 1 pm to 3 pm. You can meet some of our Scholarship recipients and enjoy lunch and tea. Then exercise your brain and maybe win a prize in our Trivia contest. Please bring your own tea, teacup, teapot. Also bring a cut sandwich or a dessert to share.

Wishing you all Happy Holidays 🎄 and A Happy, Healthy New Year 2026! 🐉 🐉

**Jeannette Santovasi, LCV President**



## MEMBERSHIP

Please welcome new member, **Janet Adams**, to our LCV AAUW Branch! Please add her name and information to your new membership directory. Janet Adams  
Jradams288@gmail.com  
203-803-9792

The remaining 2025-26 membership directories that were not picked up at the October or November meetings were mailed out to those members.

Remember that an updated roster is also available on the password protected page of our website: [www.lowerctvalley-ct.aauw.net](http://www.lowerctvalley-ct.aauw.net) (PW is lcvmember). New members are always welcome to join throughout the year. Please contact us if you know of a qualified person who would like to join.

**Margie Rice and Deb Herskowitz, Co-Chairs**

## SCHOLARSHIP

### **Scholarship Selection Committee**

The committee is in the process of making the grant applications more user friendly for the applicants as well as the committee members. Since we are receiving more than 30 applicants per grant cycle we need a faster more equitable approach to scoring each students' application in a timely manner. We are receiving help with this process from Gloria Gery, who is not a member of the committee, and Linda Frigon and Eileen Browne who are members. The committee should be ready to test our new system after the first of the year.

**Olga Saubermann, Director of Scholarship**



## INTEREST GROUPS

### AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP

Date: **Wednesday, December 3**

Time: **1:00pm**

Location: **via Zoom**

Book: ***How to Read a Book* by Monica Wood**

The Afternoon Book Group met on November 5th to discuss ***All the Beauty in the World*** by **Patrick Bringley**, a memoir of his experiences working as a museum guard at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The author left a prestigious job at the New Yorker magazine when his brother died of cancer. Bringley sought an environment of beauty and peace where he could work through his grief, and the museum offered that.

The book offered many subjects for us to discuss:

- the behind-the-scenes world of a major museum and the challenges of working with visitors;
- the range of experiences and backgrounds of the other guards, half of whom come from other countries;
- the various works of art that Bringley gets to know when he spends time in their presence;
- the healing power of a beautiful artwork; and
- the author's descriptive writing that brings alive this major museum.

We were surprised that the book has been adapted to a one-man theatrical play and hope that we could see it sometime.

Thanks to Elaine Quayle who did research into the author's life. We all agreed it was a memorable book that would be enjoyed by many readers.

The books we will read for the next few months are:

**Wednesday, December 3rd-- *How to Read a Book*—Monica Wood—fiction--**A novel about the chance meeting of three people: a woman recently released from prison for a drunk-driving crash that killed a kindergarten teacher; a retired English teacher who runs a prison book group; and a man whose wife was killed by the drunk driver. A book about the power of reading to change lives.

**Wednesday, January 7th--*Daughters of the Bamboo Grove: From China to America, A True Story of Abduction, Adoption, and Separated Twins*—Barbara Demick—nonfiction—**The story of twin sisters torn apart by China's one-child policy and the rise of international adoption. The journalist/ author (who also wrote *Eat the Buddha* about Tibet which the Afternoon Book Group read recently) investigated the abductions of Chinese children, some of whom were adopted by American families who thought they had been abandoned. She traces the fate of one set of twins—one who remains in China, and the other who lives in Texas.

We hope you can join us soon for one of these meetings.  
Happy reading!

**Sue Aberbach and Elaine Quayle**  
**Afternoon Book Group organizers**

### ***Book Author Luncheon Committee*** ***Kick-Off Meeting***

**Monday, January 5th, Buell Room,  
Essex Public Library from 1:00 -  
3:00 pm.**

**If you'd like to learn more about  
our exciting 2026 plans -- and  
would consider joining our  
committee, join us! We have  
opportunities in sponsorship  
solicitation and auction Item  
donation -- much of which is done  
by email.**







*December Hike at Rattling Valley Ridge Preserve in Deep River*

### HIKING GROUP

**Date: Thursday, December 18th**

**Time: 10 am**

**Location: Doanes' Woods, James Glen & Woodward Hill and George C. Lyon Nature Preserve in Essex/Deep River**

More information will be emailed to everyone in the hiking group about a week before the hike. If you would like to be added to the email group email [margierice@comcast.net](mailto:margierice@comcast.net).

We had a nice November hike at Rattling Valley Ridge Preserve in Deep River. See picture above.

**Margie Rice and Kathy Heebner, Co-Chairs**

### GREAT DECISIONS

**Great Decisions will not meet in December.**

**Karen Christman, Chair**  
([kmcl12@comcast.net](mailto:kmcl12@comcast.net))

### MAH JONGG

**Date: Tuesday, December 9th**

**Time: 12:30 p.m.**

**Place: Margie Rice's home, 30 Beaver Dam Trail, Old Saybrook**

The Mah Jongg interest group meets monthly on the second Tuesday at 12:30 for several hours of friendly Mah Jongg games, all experience levels are

welcome! A reminder for members to order their official 2026 Mah Jongg cards. We support a Temple Emmanuel fundraiser by ordering cards through them, contact Pat Prendergast for details. You can also order at National Mah Jongg League at <https://www.nationalmahjonggleague.org>. For the December meeting, please RSVP to Pat Prendergast and Margie Rice by Tuesday 12/2, [margierice@comcast.net](mailto:margierice@comcast.net), [pprender7@gmail.com](mailto:pprender7@gmail.com). Let Pat know if you have any questions.

**Pat Prendergast, Mah Jongg Chair**

### CRAFTING GROUP

**December Event- Trio of Gnomes**

**Date: December 8<sup>th</sup> from 1-3pm**

**Place: Promethea Arts in Deep River**

This class will just be our group and costs \$45/ PP to be paid to Kathy Heeber by **November 18th**.

Take a look at the item on their website.  
[https://www.promethea-arts.com/service-page/gnome-workshop-september-8th-1-3pm?referral=service\\_list\\_widget](https://www.promethea-arts.com/service-page/gnome-workshop-september-8th-1-3pm?referral=service_list_widget)  
Contact Kathy Heebner to join the group, [ksslalikos@gmail.com](mailto:ksslalikos@gmail.com).

Contact Kathy Heebner to join the Crafting group, [ksslalikos@gmail.com](mailto:ksslalikos@gmail.com).

**Kathy Heebner, Chair**

### EVENING BOOK GROUP

**Date: Tuesday, December 16**

**Time: 7:00pm**

**Location: Home of Jane Gould, Saybrook Station 7 N. Main St. Old Saybrook (Community Room)**

**Book: *Marriage at Sea: A True Story of Love, Obsession, and Shipwreck* by Sophie Elmhirst**

Many thanks to **Liz Weinstein** and **Sharon Howell** for their terrific contributions to the Evening Book Group's November meeting. Sharon did an excellent job of reviewing *The Berry Pickers* by **Amanda Peters**, and Liz was the consummate host of our meeting of 16 participants.

Overall, the book received a positive response for its portrayal of the pain suffered by its two main

characters stemming from the illegal removal of Norma (also known as Ruthie) from her Canadian indigenous family. Her brother, Joe, who was her constant companion in her early years, spent a lifetime feeling responsible for her loss. The novel also dealt with prejudices against the indigenous population and the national institutions that attempted to erase their identity as native Canadians.

The Evening Book Group will meet again at 7 pm on **Tuesday, December 16**, at the home of Jane Gould to consider *Marriage at Sea: A True Story of Love, Obsession, and Shipwreck* by **Sophie Elmhirst**. Jane G. will lead the discussion. Please call or email Jane at 203-215-5012 or [janegould7@comcast.net](mailto:janegould7@comcast.net) if you plan to attend. Her address is Saybrook Station, 7 North Main St., Old Saybrook. We will be meeting in the Community Room.

The Evening and Afternoon Book Groups have chosen *Lion Women of Tehran* by **Marjan Kamali** as their book for the **Joint Book Group meeting on June 3**.

**Mary Jane Peterson**,  
Evening Book Group Coordinator

### **FOODIES**

**Foodies Dinner at The Griswold Inn—Essex, CT**

**Date: Wednesday, Dec. 17**

**Time: 5:30 p.m.**

**Place: The Griswold Inn—36 Main Street, Essex, CT Main Dining Room — 860-767-1776**

**Cost: No advance fee— individual checks will be provided.**

**Parking: Available on Main Street; please consider carpooling.**

**Another special gathering with fine food and friends!** Information about The Griswold Inn is available here: [griswoldinn](http://griswoldinn.com).

**Note: This event is full.** If you previously signed up and are unable to attend, please let both Gail and Carole know by email or text.

### **Contacts:**

**Gail Briggs at [gail.briggs1@comcast.net](mailto:gail.briggs1@comcast.net) or 860-304-1633**

**Carole Otto at [ottocarole@gmail.com](mailto:ottocarole@gmail.com) or 860-575-4718**

### **WALKING GROUP**

**Date: December 30**

**Time and Place: TBD**

Walking group is scheduled for December 30, location to be determined. Of course, all weather dependent!

**Orlene Weyland**, Walking Group Chair

### **BIRTHDAY DAY CLUB**

We have 40 people signed up for our birthday gatherings. This is a smaller group than our general meetings, so it's a nice way to get to know other AAUW members. At our November gathering, we had 8 members at the Paperback Café in Old Saybrook. Anyone who has a birthday in **December**, don't forget to sign up and join us!

We have people who are coordinating plans for **March, June, July, August and November**. If you can help with another month, email Deb Herskowitz at [djherskowitz@gmail.com](mailto:djherskowitz@gmail.com) or Cathy Purcell at [cjpurcell01@frontier.com](mailto:cjpurcell01@frontier.com). You will receive the names and emails of people who signed up for your month. Simply send an email to the people on your list and suggest a place and a time to meet.

**KEEP YOUR PLANS SIMPLE!** Meet for coffee and conversation at one of our many fantastic local restaurants, coffee bars and bakeries.

**If you can't plan a gathering, but you would still like to be part of a celebration, that's not a problem.** Send Deb or Cathy, your name, email, the month, and date of your birthday (**NOT THE YEAR**), and we will plan something for you.

**Sign-up sheets will be available at all general meetings!**