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JANUARY 2026
Lower Connecticut Valley Newsletter

LCV JANUARY CALENDAR EVENTS
(Details inside/on LCV Website Calendar)

Tuesday, December 30
10:00am – Walking Group

Saturday, January 10
1:00pm – Tea & Trivia

Wednesday, January 7
1:00pm - Afternoon Book Club (via Zoom)

Thursday, January 22
10:30am-Hiking Group

Tuesday, January 13
12:30pm – Mah Jongg

Wednesday, January 15
5:00pm – Foodies

Friday, January 23
10:45 am - Cultural Arts Trip-Flo Gris

Tuesday, January 27
7:00pm – Evening Book Group

NO Great Decisions or Crafting



LCV January Tea & Trivia

Saturday, January 10th
1:00pm-3:00pm

Saybrook Pavilion Saybrook Point
Old Saybrook

Bring your tea, teacup and/or teapot.

Please also bring a small sandwich or two
-OR-
A dessert to share.

TRIVIA CONTEST TO BE HOSTED BY
SOME OF OUR VERY OWN MEMBERS.

We will also have the pleasure of meeting some
of our 2025 scholarship recipients!





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HAPPY 2026 NEW YEAR to all of you!



Remember to come to our annual **January Tea at 1 pm on Saturday, January 10, 2026**, at the Vicky Duffy Pavilion in Old Saybrook. We hope to have several of our scholarship recipients there! Please bring a sandwich or two OR a small dessert along with your teacup, tea and if you wish a teapot. After lunch, we will have our annual Trivia challenge -- which is always a lot of fun! Prizes will be awarded!

Thursday, February 12th brings the **Valentine's Day luncheon** at the Acton Library. (Please note that this event will be at 11:30 am). The AAUW LCV will have catered food available at the event, and we will have a presentation by Orlene Weyland. She will share a love story from her recently published book.

The Book Author Luncheon Scholarship Committee will be gearing up with their kickoff meeting on January 5, 2026, at the Essex Library at 1 p.m. This is our main fund-raising event. The Book Author Luncheon is scheduled for **Saturday, April 11, 2026**, at the Saybrook Inn.

The position of Website Coordinator will be available in 2026. This position does NOT require any special software or web administration skills. LCV and ESP website pages need to be updated periodically with new budgets, financial reports, membership forms and rosters, newsletters, etc. The updated materials are provided by the LCV and/or ESP members responsible. Page layouts may also need updating. The Website Coordinator forwards the materials and/or layout changes to the designated AAUW webmaster for website placement. **Training and assistance are available.**

If you are interested in learning more about this position, please contact me for next steps.

Jeannette Santovasi, LCV President



SCHOLARSHIP

All-In-One Applicant Submission Management Software - Reviewr

Following the latest grant application cycle and **receiving 45 submissions for only 8 grants**, the pressing need to enhance our application process was highlighted. Improvements would help us achieve **more consistency and fairness**, as well as make the collection, review, organization, and distribution of applicant documents **more efficient**. The coordinator managing applications has been inundated by the volume of paperwork, as each applicant submits an application form, two references, a resume, and transcripts—often arriving in assorted formats from multiple sources. Based on consultations with peer organizations, **Reviewr**, a comprehensive submission management software, **was strongly recommended**.

After meeting with the Reviewr management team, viewing a demonstration of their product, and speaking with the scholarship committee, who unanimously supported moving forward with a partnership, we recommended to the Education and Scholarship Board approval of a one-year contract with Reviewr to develop a new application, enhance our processes, and deliver timely feedback to applicants. A small team will begin working with Reviewr in January to create our new application and processes for this year's grant applicants.

Scholarship and Grant funding

The Education and Scholarship Program Board extends its sincere appreciation to the members who have made generous contributions through Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) this fiscal year to support our 2026 Scholarship and Grant Funding. We gratefully acknowledge **MaryAnn Iadarola, Gloria Gery, Linda Frigon, Deb DeHertogh, and Eileen Newgarden** for their **valuable support**.

Linda Frigon, ESP Treasurer



SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION COMMITTEE

The Scholarship Selection Committee has invited the **2025-2026 grant recipients to attend the January Tea** on Saturday the 10th at 1pm at the Vicky Duffy Pavilion formerly known as the Saybrook Point Pavilion. This is a good opportunity for our members to meet the grant recipients and for them to meet you. We will be presenting them with the second half of their grant money for successfully completing their fall semester and enrolling in the spring semester. They usually stay for the trivia which is great fun.

The committee will meet in early January to finalize the new application process.

Olga Saubermann,
Director of Scholarships

LCV/TPEP UPDATE

In recent communication with Professor Anna Terwiel, Co-Director of TPEP, we learned that her book, ***Prison Abolition for Realists***, has just been released by University of Minnesota Press. If anyone cares to order a copy, go to z.umn.edu/akqz and use the code MN93910 to obtain a 30% discount, available until Feb 1, 2026. Per copy cost \$17.47 plus \$9.42 for shipping and handling.

TPEP will run a course at YCI entitled ***Philosophy and the Self***, starting in January. Anna explained that TPEP has applied for and received grant funding from various organizations but was still seeking \$2,000 to cover the cost of the course. After careful



consideration of plans for education grants in the coming year, ESP approved the donation of the \$2,000.

Judith Slisz, Coordinator, LCV /TPEP Collaboration and Chair, ESP

2026 BOOK AUTHOR LUNCHEON:

(BAL) Committee Kick Off
Meeting: January 5, 2026 At 1 pm
Essex Library - Buell Room

Our kick-off meeting will focus on responsibilities, ticket pricing, schedules, and more. If you are not yet a member of the committee, please join us. It's a great way to get involved, develop deeper relationships with fellow LCV AAUW members, and make a difference. This always sold-out event is so sought after by guests and members! We hope to net at least \$20,000 profit in 2026.

Want more information: Contact Gloria Gery, 2026 BAL

Chair. gloriagery@gmail.com (413) 221-4694.

INTEREST GROUPS

AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP

Date: **Wednesday, January 7**

Time: **1:00pm**

Location: **via Zoom**

Book: ***Daughters of the Bamboo Grove: From China to America, A True Story of Abduction, Adoption, and Separated Twins*** by **Barbara Demick**

The LCV Afternoon Book Group met on Wednesday, December 3rd to talk about ***How To Read a Book*** by Monica Wood, a novel about the meeting of three characters: a woman who leads a prison reading group, the imprisoned woman who killed a



kindergarten teacher in a drunk driving incident, and the husband of the woman who was killed. Many thanks to Judith Slisz who led our discussion.

Judith explained some background information about the author who is a prolific novelist and playwright, winning many regional New England prizes for her writing. We talked about the characterization of the three main characters as well as the women in the prison book group, the characters' family members, and their coworkers. One fascinating aspect of the plot is a workplace in a college laboratory studying cognition and speech of exotic birds; the author worked with a Harvard animal intelligence scientist for this part of the plot. We were also interested in the parallels to the LCV sponsorship of education for women at York Correctional Institution. Thanks again, Judith, for a memorable discussion!

To look ahead to our next books:

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.



Wednesday, February 4th--*Twist*—Colum McCann—fiction--A novel about a journalist who is embedded on a ship tasked with repairing undersea fiber-optic cables as it moves from South Africa across the western Atlantic, revealing the fragility of the vital information links and the skilled engineers and divers who repair them. (We read *Apeirogon* by McCann two years ago.)

We hope you can join us soon! Happy reading!

Sue Aberbach and Elaine Quayle,
Afternoon Book Group organizers

CULTURAL ARTS

Florence Griswold Museum

Exhibit: “Inside Out: Contexts for American Art”

Date: Friday, January 23, 2026

Time: 11:00 – 12:00 pm tour, lunch follows at Hideaway Restaurant, Old Lyme

Cost: \$21 plus lunch

The one-hour tour in the museum will be led by one of the museum's docents. Check out the Flo Gris Museum website for a description of the exhibit. We will meet in the museum's foyer at 10:45 am; carpooling is recommended. There is a minimum of 10 people needed for the tour and a maximum of 15. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Marcia Machuga or Debbie Kupfer. Payment is due on Friday, January 16, to hold your spot. There will be no refunds. You may send a check to Debbie Kupfer at 8 Kaatskill Lane, Niantic, CT 06357, or Venmo to her account: @Deborah-Kupfer-1.

Debbie Kupfer, Marcia Machuga,
Co-chairs



GREAT DECISIONS

Our **2026 topic books have arrived** so I'll be looking for you all during January events to give you yours. Also, if in your travels. you are driving by my street (59 Obed Heights, not far from the transfer station), I welcome you picking up your book. Please just text me at 860-304-3498 to make arrangements. Our **first Great Decisions meeting will be in February.**

Karen Christman, Chair

HIKING GROUP

Date: **Thursday, January 22**

Time: **10:30 am**

Location: **Yearly winter hike in The Preserve**

Our December hike (Doanes' Woods, James Glen & Woodward Hill and George C. Lyon Nature Preserve in Essex/Deep River) was cancelled due to weather conditions. We'll try it again in the Spring when the weather is better. More information on our January hike will be emailed to everyone in the hiking group about a week before the hike. If you would like to be added (or taken off) to the email group email margierice@comcast.net. Happy New Year!

Margie Rice and Kathy Heebner, Co-chairs



MAH JONGG

Date: Tuesday, January 13th

Time: 12:30 p.m.

Place: Mary Jane Peterson's home, 35 Cinnamon Ridge, 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 the National Mah Jongg League at <https://www.nationalmahjonggleague.org>.

For the January meeting, please RSVP to Pat Prendergast and Mary Jane Peterson by Tuesday January 16 at mjposct@comcast.net, pprender7@gmail.com. Let Pat know if you have any questions.

Pat Prendergast, Mah Jongg Chair

EVENING BOOK GROUP

Date: **Tuesday, January 27**

Time: **7:00pm**

Location: **Via Zoom**

Book: *House of Spirits* by Isabelle Allende

The Evening book group had a fun and informational discussion on Tuesday, December 16 at the home of Jane Gould, *Marriage at Sea: A True Story of Love, Obsession, and Shipwreck* by Sophie Elmhirst. Jane G both hosted and led the discussion. The group was amazed at the ability of the couple to survive for four months on a raft in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. What surprised us even more was that, after the Baileys raised money to buy a new boat, they went on to successfully sail to Patagonia from Great Britain. It was a



story of resilience in the face of adversity! Many thanks to Jane for leading and for the research she did to add to the story of Maralyn and Maurice Bailey.

The book group will meet again on Tuesday, January 27 at 7 pm on Zoom. Deb DeHertogh will lead the discussion of *House of Spirits* by **Isabelle Allende**. Mary Jane, as host, will send out a Zoom invitation to book group members. If any other LCV member is interested in attending, please email me at mjposct@comcast.net.

Mary Jane Peterson, Chair, Evening book group

FOODIES **OUR JANUARY 2026 FOODIES** **EVENT** ✦

Date: **Wednesday, January 14**
Time: **5:00 PM**
Place: **Café Routier – Bistro & Lounge**
at 1353 Boston Post Road, Westbrook

We have reserved 2 tables to accommodate 14 Foodies! As always, we collect the first responses for up to 14 people and then start a waiting list. By the time you read this in the newsletter the list may already be full but try anyway.

FYI: The always-fabulous Café Routier is a local favorite known for its warm service, creative cocktails, and cozy, sophisticated atmosphere.

Carole Otto and Gail Briggs, Co-Chairs

CRAFTING GROUP **No events planned for January.**



WALKING GROUP

Date: Tuesday, December 30

Time: 10:00am

Meet: Saybrook Home Parking Lot, Old Saybrook

Let's plan to meet in the parking lot of **Saybrook Home at 10:00a.m.** The details of the route are being worked out but we'll start from there and include Founders Memorial Park and another location that I need to map out. Plan on about an hour and a half for walking time.

Let me know if you can join and if the weather doesn't cooperate, I'll send out an email. **Happy New Year to all of you!**

Orlene Weyland, Walking Group Chair

BIRTHDAY DAY CLUB

We have 40 people signed up for our birthday gatherings.

Anyone who has a birthday in January, 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 or would just like to attend a gathering, email Deb Herskowitz at djherskowitz@gmail.com or Cathy Purcell at cjpurcell01@frontier.com. For those coordinating a month, 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. **Sign-up sheets will be available at all general meetings!**

Deb Herskowitz and Cathy Purcell, Co-Chairs