



A message from WPF President, Jennifer Mencarini

Greetings from what feels like the North Pole! As I write this, we're under an Extreme Cold Watch and Winter Storm Warning. Hopefully everyone made it through the first Icepocalypse 2026 unscathed, and that you stay safe and warm through this one!

Thank you to everyone who contacted me by phone, text, or email to provide feedback about the January membership meeting and the content shared therein. I appreciate the opportunity to hear and consider your thoughts about what's happening with WPF. Please continue to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Here are a few updates of happenings since the January membership meeting:



Jennifer Mencarini
WPF President

- **Insurance:** The Board has requested and received quotes from insurers for both general liability and directors & officers insurance. The quotes we received for the policies were quite reasonable. The Board will vote on approving the disbursement of funds for the insurance policies shortly.
- **Dues Increase:** The Board will be presenting an increased dues structure to the membership once we have finalized the cost of the insurance policies referenced above. You will receive written notice, via email, of the proposed dues change and the date of the vote, which will likely be our March membership meeting. Due to the timeframes required by our current Bylaws, the Board has decided to delay the initial due date for dues payments to April 1, and the delinquency date to April 15. Immediately following the membership vote on the dues increase, you will receive an email with a link to pay online. You can also request an invoice if needed.

- **Governance:** The Board has conducted a review of WPF's Bylaws and determined that they need to be updated in order to reflect WPF's current membership and operations. We have retained a highly experienced nonprofit attorney unaffiliated with WPF, at a very low fixed fee, to update them in alignment with both the North Carolina General Statutes and current best practice. As required by the Bylaws, once the draft is complete, it will be presented to the membership for a vote. I anticipate that notice will be provided in March in sufficient time for a vote to take place at the April membership meeting.
- **Technology:** As a Board we are working on low- or no-cost ways to update our website, CRM, and communication platforms to enhance the member experience. We will keep you informed as to any necessary changes.

Please know that the Board does not take any of these matters lightly, and is highly focused on WPF's continued organizational health and success. We appreciate the trust you've placed in us to lead WPF this year.

Wishing all of you a very happy Valentine's/Galentines Day, celebrating love in all its forms.

~Jen



ACTIVE & ACTIVE RETIRED MEMBERS RSVP ONLY
if you can NOT attend

EMERITUS & SUPPORTING MEMBERS, RSVP to attend.
Lunch fee \$30.
Cash, Check, PayPal, or Zelle

MEETING RSVP

WPF
2026 Board of Directors

Jennifer Mencarini
President

Amy Meineke
President Elect

Christine Byrd
2nd Vice President

Janice Lanier
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Shirley Lucky
Treasurer

Anne Smith
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Corinne Auman
Programs Chair

Susan Gutterman *Foundation President*

Neena Ballard
Director at Large

Dee Blake
Director at Large

Lorri Yaskiewicz
Past President & Nominating Chair

Sherry Barr
Administrative Assistant

WPF is committed to supporting and endorsing equal opportunities for all people without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability or genetics.

Newsletter Archives

Upcoming Events

Special Interest Groups

WPF Member Directory

WPF Facebook Page

What's for lunch in February?

- Butternut Squash Bisque
- Tomato Basil Bisque
- Assorted rolls & whipped butter
- Baked sweet potato bar with assorted toppings
 - Bacon, candied pecans, scallions, cinnamon butter, pineapple chutney
- Mixed greens salad bar with displayed toppings
 - Matchstick carrots, diced tomatoes, cucumbers, artichoke hearts, olives, bacon
 - Ranch, balsamic vinaigrette and blue cheese dressings
- Sticky Toffee Pudding with Toffee Sauce & Whipped Cream



FEBRUARY PROGRAM



Whitney Oakley, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Guilford County

Dr. Whitney Oakley is the fifth superintendent of Guilford County Schools (GCS), serving more than 66,000 PK-12 students and 10,000 employees at 120 schools. Appointed in 2022 as the district's first homegrown superintendent, Oakley is a long-time educator and school administrator with a proven track record of improving student learning outcomes.

Dr. Oakley is committed to addressing barriers to student success and achievement. During her tenure, GCS has seen an increase from 62 schools meeting or exceeding academic growth in 2021-22 to 92 schools meeting or exceeding expected growth in 2023-24, an increase of 30 schools in two years.

Additionally, Dr. Oakley remains committed to ensuring that every student is prepared and can thrive once they leave GCS. During the 2023-24 school year, GCS achieved the highest cohort graduation rate in the district's history at 92.2%, including the highest graduation rates for African American students at 91.1%, Hispanic students at 89.8%, and Students with Disabilities at 75.8%. The district also maintained the highest cohort graduation rate among the largest districts in North Carolina, including the state's overall cohort graduation rate. In 2023-24, GCS students took more than 10,000 college courses and earned nearly 11,000 CTE credentials, a 263% increase over four years.

Under Oakley's leadership, Guilford County Schools is managing \$2 billion in school construction bonds, one of the largest bond programs in North Carolina. The district also implemented a comprehensive strategy to increase safety measures in schools, and increased access to its telehealth and mental health supports, deploying nearly \$30 million to support mental health for students.

Oakley holds a Bachelor of Science in special education from East Carolina University, a Master of Education in elementary education from Greensboro College, a Specialist in Education and a Doctor of Education in educational leadership from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). She lives in Guilford County with her husband and two children, who are both currently enrolled in GCS.



Greeters and 4 minute Specials

Please consider being a greeter or sharing a 4 min special for an upcoming membership meeting this year.

Greeters: Arrive to the monthly meeting of your choice around 11:50am. Sherry will provide you the purple greeter sash. Grab your nametag, stand near one of the entry doors and welcome your fellow WPF sisters. [SIGN UP HERE](#)



4 Min Special: If you have never done one please consider signing up for one of the dates available. This is a chance for you to tell us about you, not just your work but what makes you-you! This year 4 min specials will be given after the program and we ask that you try to keep them to a few short min. Not comfortable speaking to the group? No problem, write a 4 min special to go in a newsletter.

Email Janice Lanier at janice.lanier88@gmail.com with your 4 min special for a newsletter and we will include it during this year.

WPF Foundation News

A Note From Susan R. Gutterman, WPF Foundation President

I am happy to share that the Grants Committee, led by Sasha Trosch, will be reviewing grant applications and narrowing down the field of worthy recipients. With the inclement weather, we extended the deadline for grant applications until February 6, 2026. Thanks to the incredibly generous giving of our WPF sisters, and the Rock the Night Away fundraiser, the contributions were significantly higher than previous years! I look forward to sharing the final numbers with you soon.

Thank you to our supporters!

Thanks to your generosity over the past 41 years, your contributions allowed the Foundation to provide over \$400,000 in grants to organizations that align with our mission to empower Women and Girls.

Have questions?

Feel free to contact Susan R. Gutterman, WPF President, or any Foundation Board member for more information about grants or the WPF Foundation.

Together, we can empower women and girls!

WPF FOUNDATION
2026 Board of Directors



Susan Gutterman, *President*
Chandra Hackenbruch, *Past President*
Laura Burton, *Vice President*
Neena Ballard, *Secretary*
Jody Susong, *Treasurer*

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Christine Byrd
Beth Fischer
Karen Foster
Maria Hanlin
Kim Marriott
Amy Meinecke
Martha Peddrick
Ernestine Taylor
Sasha Trosch

WPF Membership News

Anne Flegal Smith, Membership Chair

CURRENT MEMBERS: 2026 WPF membership renewal notices will be sent out soon and membership fees are due by April 1. If you are considering changing your membership status, please review Section II of the Bylaws (available on the website) for the qualifications of the four membership categories, then request the change to the Membership Chair, **Anne Smith**, annefsmith@gmail.com or 336 420 9245.

NEW MEMBER SPONSORSHIP: Your WPF Membership Committee is ready for an exciting and productive new year, and learning about the great applicants you'll be proposing. We love having new members join our group! Please let me know if you plan to sponsor a candidate this year, as this will assist the Membership Committee's planning process. Although the June 1 deadline for the 2026 class seems far in the future, it's only FIVE MONTHS AWAY. The membership packet and additional information are available on the website. I find that sharing this information in full with the new member candidate before they pursue membership is helpful.

The basic requirements for membership applications haven't changed:

- New members are accepted once yearly. The Membership Chair must receive completed applications by June 1 for membership to begin on July 1.

- A new member must be sponsored by a total of three sponsors — a primary sponsor and two secondary sponsors. *The primary sponsor must be an Active or Active Retired member. The two secondary sponsors may be Active, Active Retired or Emeritus members.*
- Prospective members will attend three WPF lunch meetings, one with each of her sponsors, a total of three meetings, *within the twelve months prior to application filing.*
- The primary sponsor is responsible for ensuring that an applicant appears to meet the basic membership qualifications set out in the New Member Application Packet. Questions may be directed to the Membership Chair.

Please make sure that all sponsors qualify to sponsor a new member:

- An Active and Active Retired member may either sponsor or co-sponsor a total of no more than two new member applications in a fiscal year.
- An Emeritus member may co-sponsor no more than two new member applications in a fiscal year.
- New members may be a sponsor after 24 months of membership. The waiting period to sponsor a new member doesn't apply to WPF members who have been reinstated as members after having left WPF in good standing.
- Members of the Membership Committee, WPF President and Supporting members cannot act as sponsors.

If you have any further questions about membership or sponsorship, please contact **Membership Chair, Anne Smith** at annefsmith@gmail.com or 336 420 9245.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

BOOK CLUB UPDATE

Tuesday, February 3, 6:30pm

Jody Susong's home

4901 Setter Court

Jamestown, NC 27282

Due to the popularity of our February book “The Correspondent” we will have second location for your opportunity to discuss it. Jody Susong has generously invited our waitlisted members and anyone who wants to meet, but did not RSVP to Beverley.



Beverley's house is full and we ask that if you have RSVP'd to her to stay with your original location.

For those on the waitlist, please RSVP to

Nancy Radtke nancy.radtke@howardhannatate.com or Jody Susong jsusong@triad.rr.com

Join us at Jody's for a nibble at 6:30 and a lively discussion at 7pm.
Contributions to the snack table and bar are welcome.

Books and Arts
Bel Canto AMORE
February 14, 6pm
Colonnade at Revolution Mill

Another popular event that many Books and Arts members enjoy annually is the Amore event hosted by Bel Canto at the Colonnade at Revolution Mill. The event this year is on February 14 at 6 pm. Though that seems far away, this event sells out early and it's fun to get a table together. The event includes appetizers served while enjoying a silent auction and raffle, a plated dinner and a cabaret concert. Tickets are \$130. Contact Kris Landrum (klandrum@tuggleduggins.com) if you're interested in participating.

WORKING MOMS
Coopers Hawk Winery and Restaurant
Friendly Shopping Center
Tuesday, February 17
12-1:30pm
Join us for our Lunch

Moms of all ages welcome.
RSVP to Marlee Foster at marlee.foster@conehealth.com.

Working Mom's group is part support group and part resource group. We learn so much from each other and have the chance to share the trials and tribulations of being a working Mom in this day and age. There is always laughter, an empathetic ear, and sometimes a great suggestion to help you when you thought you have exhausted all possible options.

FINANCIAL DIVAS
Wednesday, February 18, 9-10 am
Weaver Park Center, 324 W. Wendover Ave, Ste. 140

Let's make 2026 our most intentional and rewarding financial life-planning year yet. In the first part of our meeting, please be prepared to share one or two of your best tips, ideas, or personal practices that have genuinely improved your life—whether it's a favorite yoga stretch, a binge-worthy series, or a clever way of staying organized—so others can benefit too. In the second half, we'll finalize our 2026 meeting topics together, so come ready to both share and learn. OUR JAN MTG AGENDA/MEETING MOVED TO FEB DUE TO INCLIMATE WEATHER (POSTPONEMENT). For questions or more information, contact Paula McMillan at 336.337.9507 or pmcmillan@stearnsfinancial.com.

Ladies of Leisure
(and other interested parties)
Carolina Theatre Tour
Thursday, February 19, 10am

We are excited to be gathering at the Carolina Theatre on Thursday, February 19 at 10:00am followed by lunch at the recently re-opened Rhino Club. Both of these wonderful establishments

have a strong and interesting history in Greensboro.

The Carolina Theatre (310 S. Greene St., Greensboro) was billed at the “Showplace of the Carolinas” when she opened in 1927. Today she is the home to numerous concerts, classic and independent movies, community theatre and dance (just to name a few). Over 100,000 people came through her doors last year. Her history is just as unique and varied. I can promise you some very interesting stories during our behind-the-scenes tour.

Following our tour, we will walk across the street to The Rhino Club. For you who have been around Greensboro for a while (like me) will remember it as the only downtown bar. You had to be a member to get in (or be a guest of a member) and have **the key**. As a side bar, I was never a member, never had a key, but always knew someone there. It was also a place, where as a single woman, I felt safe going. The Rhino closed and, after way too many years, has reopened under new ownership, with great food and drinks.

The cost for the tour is \$15 each. Its actually a donation to the Theatre. And each is responsible for their own lunch (though I will need to give a head count, www.therhinogreensboro.com). Please look on the website for menu items. There is plenty of parking the downtown area and we are currently looking at some free options.

Please RSVP by February 17.

Call or text Mebane is you have any questions.

336-314-5226 or mebane@mebaneham.com. Venmo (Mebane Ham @Mebane-Ham) and Cash app (\$SMebaneHam) accepted.

WOW - WOMEN OF WALL STREET
Investment Club
Thursday, February 19, 6pm
Allen Tate Realtors
717 Green Valley Road, Suite 175

The first Business Meeting of the year will be on Thursday, February 19, at 6 pm, at our NEW location of the Allen Tate real estate offices located at 717 Green Valley Road, Suite 175, which is on the first floor. You can park and enter at the back of the building.

We will review the portfolio, welcome new members, and elect officers for the coming year. Please plan to attend.

Thursday, March 12, will be our Topic Meeting—“The Behavioral Psychology of Investing.” This will have good information for all levels of investors and will be open to all members of WPF. Refreshments will be served.

Finally, our trek to NYC will be April 9-13. Please contact Judy Garner at jgarner212@ymail.com if you are interested in joining us. Always a fun trip!

Looking forward to a terrific year!

DINING OUT

Wednesday, February 25

6:30pm

MJ's Restaurant

620 Dolley Madison Rd, Greensboro

Host: Pat Price

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Questions: Amy Meinecke at diningout@wpforum.org



Ladies of Leisure Annie Wu at Marshall Muse Gallery Friday, February 27

WPF Books and Arts will be attending a performance of **Music for a Great Space** at The Marshall Muse Gallery on Friday, February 27 at 7:30. This is sure to be a popular evening of storytelling, flute and dessert, in an appealing space. If you would like to join us, please buy your general seating tickets soon.

<https://musicforagreatspace.org/events/166>

Marcy McHenry will coordinate those of us who want to meet for dinner beforehand. Please let her know and she will choose a restaurant and reserve seats. Marcy's email is marcemch@aol.com



**Non-Fiction Only Book Club
Tuesday, March 3**

For our next meeting, we'll be reading:
Raising Hare: A Memoir by Chloe Dalton

Date: Tuesday, March 3rd

Location: Kris Landrum's house:

704 Plummer Drive Greensboro

RSVP to her via email please. Kris's email: KLandrum@tuggleduggins.com

Time: 7:00 pm hors d'oeuvres and social time

7:30 - 8:30 or 8:45 pm book discussion

Lindsay Brock will lead the discussion.

If it works for you to bring an appetizer or a dessert, that would be great. No signing up for snacks.

Running out of time to read the book? Please come anyway- we want to see you.

About The Book Raising Hare: A Memoir by Chloe Dalton

NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK • NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • FINALIST FOR THE 2025 WOMEN'S PRIZE • A fascinating meditation on freedom, trust, loss, and our relationship with the natural world, explored through the story of one woman's unlikely friendship with a wild hare.

Imagine you could hold a baby hare and bottle-feed it. Imagine that it lived under your roof and bounded around your bedroom at night, drumming on the duvet cover when it wanted your attention. Imagine that, more than two years later, it still ran in from the fields when you called it and slept in your house for hours on end. For political advisor and speechwriter Chloe Dalton, who spent lockdown deep in the English countryside, far away from her usual busy London life, this became her unexpected reality. We witness firsthand the joy at this extraordinary relationship between human and animal, which serves as a reminder that the best things, and most beautiful experiences, arise when we least expect them.

Organizers:

Jen Thomas & Kate Panzer

Jen's Cell 336-254-4325

Kate's Cell 336-420-1421

Ladies of Leisure

Wednesday, March 18

Anticipating spring, we are excited to announce our March outing to be a return to the popular "Art in Bloom" at the NC Museum of Art on Wednesday, March 18th.

This year's theme, "Written in the Stars," features floral designers creating arrangements that interpret pieces from the museum's collection based on signs of the Zodiac.

Tickets are limited. Two of our members have pre-purchased 16 tickets for \$45 each. (Please note that non-member tickets are \$50 and become available on February 5th). Since these tickets have been pre purchased deadline for WPF member sign up is March 1. After that if there are any unclaimed tickets we will open additional sign up to "good friends of WPF".

Itinerary and Details:

- 10:00 AM: Meet at the Whole Foods parking lot to carpool, Wednesday 3/18
- 11:30 AM: Lunch at Bella Monica, a trattoria near the museum.
- 1:30 PM: Event entrance at the museum
- 4:30 PM: Approximate arrival back in Greensboro

Payment and Registration:

To secure your spot, please send \$45 to Margaret Bertrand via Venmo (@margbert) or Zelle (336-420-1822).

Alternatively, checks can be mailed to:

Margaret Bertrand
3011 Henderson Dr.
Greensboro, NC 27410

If you have any questions,
please contact Margaret at margaretbertrand49@gmail.com.



Wild Women in the Mountains

Blowing Rock, NC

March 20-22, 2026

It is with deep regret that we must cancel the March 20 Wild Women in the Mountains. Due to the loss of Bistro Roca (our favorite Friday restaurant, which was lost to a horrible fire January 25) and a number of other factors we will look into rescheduling or just canceling for this year. Please bear with us as we look at other options.

Questions? Contact Mebane at mebane@mebaneham.com or 336.314.5226

Books and Arts

Blowing Rock Summer Trip

July 16-19, 2026

One of our 2026 activities is our annual summer trip to Blowing Rock. Since we have two houses and a condo reserved, we still have openings for the trip, scheduled for July 16th through 19th. Activity options will include the Chetola Symphony by the Lake on Friday night, the 17th (tickets around \$85), tubing on Saturday morning (\$35), and possibly a wine tasting. Other activities participants frequently enjoy are spa treatments at Chetola, shopping in downtown Blowing Rock, and hiking on nearby trails. Prices for housing for the weekend range from \$200 to \$450 depending upon type of room/bath, sharing, etc., so, something for everyone. Dinner is generally at restaurants on Thursday and Saturday nights, with Friday night picnic at the concert, and breakfast enjoyed in our lodgings. Thanks to participants, there is never a shortage of food in the lodgings! If you want to join the 17 of us who have already signed up for this weekend, contact Kris Landrum (klandrum@tuggleduggins.com) for other details. A deposit of \$150 is required to secure your spot.



Women's Professional Forum, PO Box 38594, Greensboro, NC 27438

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