

January 2026



The Y's Women Newsletter

GENERAL MEETINGS

Open to members and their guests

Place: Green's Farms Church, 71 Hillandale Road, Westport

10:45 am Coffee and Conversation

11:20 am Announcements

11:30 am Speaker

***NOTE:** Extra parking is available in front of the large lot on the grass and across the street in front of the Minister's house.*

January 12 – Andrew Wilk and the Performing Arts



For more than four decades, five-time Emmy Award-winning producer, director, musical theater and symphony conductor, and writer Andrew Wilk has been capturing the performing arts. His work includes music of all genres, Broadway theater such as *The Nance*, musical theater including

Sweeney Todd Starring Emma Thompson, solo artists such as Kristin Chenoweth, Joshua Bell, and Itzhak Perlman, as well as dance, including the Alvin Ailey Dance Company and the San Francisco Ballet for prime-time broadcast. Most recently Andrew served as executive producer of *Live From Lincoln Center*, where for almost a decade he created a variety of award-winning musical and theatrical productions for PBS. In his presentation, Andrew will discuss and show excerpts from *Simple Gifts*, one of his award-winning *Live from Lincoln Center* programs.

Donations to Mercy Learning Center

Please bring donations of nonperishable food, diapers, and female daily necessities to the first Y's Women meeting each month. They can be left at the back entrance of the Green's Farms Church prior to the meeting. Thank you for whatever you can do.

January 26 – Bill Harmer, a Library Visionary

Bill Harmer, Executive Director of the Westport Library, stands out as a dynamic advocate for public libraries, asserting their crucial role in today's society. He has redefined library management, fundraising, strategic planning, programming, and community development.



Bill came to Westport in 2015 from Michigan, where he was Executive Director of the Chelsea District Library. He has made a significant impact at the Westport Library ever since, elevating it to national recognition for innovation and community engagement. His strategic leadership resulted in a remarkable 50 percent increase in fundraising revenues and the successful management of a major \$21.5 million renovation, revitalizing the library into a modern, multifunctional space. His efforts boosted library attendance by 30 percent and program participation by 40 percent, earning the Westport Library a prestigious 5-star rating and placing it among the top 1.6 percent of US libraries.

A visionary in incorporating cutting-edge technology and digital resources, Bill was selected by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as one of 120 global library leaders. His visionary approach and unwavering commitment have significantly transformed libraries into dynamic, essential centers for learning, culture, and community engagement in the 21st century. His presentation will focus on all the services the library of the future has to offer us.



Y's Women gathered for lunch at Blackstones Grille to say a fond farewell to long-time member Annette Kirban, who is leaving for California to be near her family. Good luck, Annette!

INTEREST GROUPS (Y's Women Members Only)

NOTE: All Y's Women who participate in meetings held at the Westport Center for Senior Activities must be registered with the Center and check in before each meeting.

Book Group 2 will meet on Thursday, January 8 at the Westport Center for Senior Activities. Rochelle Field will lead us in a discussion of *Crossing the River* by Caryll Phillips. Please contact Nancy Bloom at nancyerb@aol.com if you have questions.

Book Group 3 will meet at the Westport Center for Senior Activities on Friday, January 9 at 10:30 am to discuss *March* by Geraldine Brooks. Valerie Roffe will lead the discussion. For questions or if you would like to join the group, contact Doris Levinson at drjlevinson@gmail.com.

The **Lunch and Trivia** group will meet at noon on Thursday, January 15 at the VFW Hall. The cost is \$25 (cash only). If you wish to attend, please contact Vicki Alli at victoria.alli@gmail.com or Pat Winter at 303-324-5805.

The **Mah Jong** group meets every Thursday (except January 1 for New Year's Day) from 1:00 - 4:00 pm at the Westport Center for Senior Activities. Please contact Mona Unser at mona.unser@gmail.com for information.

The **Movie Club** will meet on Wednesday, January 21 at the Westport Center for Senior Activities. We meet informally at 2:00 pm to give members a chance to socialize, and our discussion begins at 2:30. Our room often changes, so be sure to ask the front desk about our location. We are limited to 25 attendees, so please confirm your attendance with Margaret Mitchell by January 15.

We will discuss the movies *Mansfield Park* and *Titanic*. *Mansfield Park* was shown on December 20 on the PBS program Reel 13, and a video is listed in the catalog of the Fairfield Library. *Titanic* is available on Netflix, and a video is listed in the catalogs of the Westport and Fairfield Libraries.

Mansfield Park is a 1999 British romantic comedy-drama based on Jane Austen's 1814 novel of the same name, written and directed by Patricia Rozema. The film departs from the original novel in several respects. For example, the life of Jane Austen is incorporated into the film, as are the issues of slavery and West Indian plantations.

Titanic is a 1997 American epic historical romance written and directed by James Cameron. Incorporating both historical and fictionalized aspects, it is based on accounts of the sinking of the RMS *Titanic* in 1912. Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet star as members of different social classes who fall in love during the ship's ill-fated maiden voyage.

If you wish to be added to the email list for future events, please contact Margaret Mitchell at 255-9094 or margaret06824@yahoo.com.



Solos members once again supported the Westport Department of Human Services' Annual Holiday Giving Program by bringing new books for children to their Holiday luncheon. The department, and the children, were delighted with their generosity!

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INTEREST GROUPS

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NewsTalk: Interested in national and world affairs? Join other Y's Women for lively and informative discussions at NewsTalk. We meet the fourth Thursday of each month, and our next meeting is scheduled for January 22 from 10 - 11:30 am at the Westport Library, Room 213. For information, contact Becky Ruthven at bruthven06880@gmail.com.

Starting January 6, **Scrabble** will meet every Tuesday at 10:30 at 214 Lansdowne in Westport. Please contact Pennie More at pcmore2@gmail.com to reserve a seat at the table.

The New Yorker Discussion Group: This group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 10:30 am until noon in the Westport Library, Room 213. Each participant chooses an article from one of the previous month's issues and leads a short discussion about the article. Participants who are not able to meet personally can participate on Zoom. If interested, please contact Ellen Cahill at 856-6561 or ellenjcahill@hotmail.com for details.

CARPOOL & GO!

On Friday, January 23, Carpool and Go! will enjoy a 45-minute guided tour of Norwalk's historic Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum. Since the tour is limited to 15 people, don't delay in registering for this outing.



History: In 1862, LeGrand Lockwood donated \$1,000 "for the enlistment of another company of volunteers to fight for the North in the Civil War." He and his wife, Anna Louisa Lockwood, also donated \$400 to purchase peacoats and Bibles for the soldiers.

In 1864, LeGrand began construction of a "cottage" in Norwalk's Elm Park, and in 1868 he and his family moved into their new home on West Avenue. Over the years, he purchased artwork by Albert Bierstadt, Jasper Cropsey, and Asher Durand to decorate their mansion. BUT, on September 24, 1869, "Black Friday," the day of the largest panic in American financial history, Lockwood and Company went broke.

Ultimately, in 1876 Charles Mathews purchased the house as a summer retreat for his family. Though the mansion has faced complete destruction several times in the intervening years, the recent renovation has returned it to its former glory.

We'll meet behind the Wells Fargo Bank in Trader Joe's parking lot at 10:15 am with a 10:30 departure. The 11:00 guided tour of the mansion will cost \$8 per person. Please contact Jill Meyer at 226-4310 or jill@awayfortheday.net to reserve your place, and mail a check for \$8 payable to Jill to 137 Lansdowne, Westport, CT 06880. The gas reimbursement for your driver will be \$3 in cash. Please indicate whether you can drive, as drivers are always needed and appreciated. Following our tour, we will dine at 12:30 pm at **Capuli** on Westport's Post Road, across from the old Post Office.

Directions: Take Exit 15 off I-95 and drive straight ahead onto West Avenue at the light at the bottom of the right-hand ramp. Turn almost immediately into the mansion's driveway, and then turn right onto the property.

Jill Meyer 216-7666

Lydia Menendez 543-7484

Happy New Year!