



SERVING WOMEN FOR OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS

President's Message

Arlene Groch

aggroch@mac.com

Dear AAUW-AC Friends,

2021 has arrived with both hope and fear for the survival of our democracy. The horrendous January 6th attempted coup was a wake-up call to us to realize the fragility of this experiment we call a constitutional democracy. A new administration under President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris promises ethical, professional, transparent and competent government. We certainly need that.

AAUW National is calling on us to help “make 2021 the year we finally address societies deep inequities.” For starters, the AAUW Board of Directors and AAUW Governance Committee have recommended to **eliminate the degree requirement for membership**. Their rationale for doing so is, in part:

AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity, yet the requirement for membership explicitly denies access to membership to those without college degrees. AAUW does not promote equity for all women and girls if the organization maintains exclusionary membership requirements. **The membership requirement is not fair, is not right, and is not equity. This is simply the right thing to do.**

[Emphasis mine] <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/2021-comment-bylaws/>

There are several things we, as branch members, can do to help achieve equity in AAUW.

1. Until February 5th, 2021, we can comment on the proposed changes.
<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/2021-comment-bylaws/>
2. On Thursday, February 11th from 3-4:30 we can attend the *AAUW National Webinar Creating a Diversity Structure and Planning for Success* to help us move closer to becoming a more diverse and inclusive branch. Please register here and attend it with me:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_a7tcOqNmTwKcr7BYpktH7Q?emci=da3dcb75-8161-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&emdi=9500ccc5-a761-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&ceid=966874
3. At our April Branch meeting you will have an opportunity to express your views and argue in favor or opposition to the proposed change.
4. This spring you will be able to vote on the amendment.

In 2019 and 2020 our Branch has worked to improve our understanding of these issues and become a better ally to our Black and WOC friends. We held a major Branch Program to learn how our society became so racially divided and inequitable. Some of us are studying these issues more deeply under Carolyn Bassett's strong leadership in our For a More Equal Society monthly study group. And in March Dr. Daryl Thorne will help us understand the real world impact of US Native American policy over the past 400 years.

This spring each of us will have a chance to move AAUW to a more democratic organization. I'd love to discuss the issue with any member. Call me at 609-646-9447.

Arlene

I'm very happy to have Kris Baker now working on the membership committee. She has a strong commitment to AAUW and with her personal kindness and willingness to connect with people; she will add so much to this committee. I look forward to working with Kris during this next year.

Our membership goal for 2021 is to add at least one new member each month. I'm pleased to note that we have a new member, who is actually rejoining after she moved to Pennsylvania. You will get to see her as she joins some of our zoom meetings!

Please welcome back to our organization one of our past presidents,

Marie Everleth
2731 Terrwood Dr. East
Macungie PA 18062
610-928-0079
Mariechet@webtv.net

Please note, member Carol Zerbe has updated her email to: czpaints45@gmail.com Kindly update your email address book with this new email address.

Stay Safe. Social Distance. Wear a mask!

Here's what's coming in 2021

February 17th at 7 pm – So You Think It Can't Happen to Your Family: The Drug Crisis in Atlantic County.



Lisa Bee, Leader of Angels in Motion in the Atlantic County area, and Eric Scheffler, Atlantic County Sheriff, will share their personal experience; discuss how people become addicted, what are the "warning signs," and the impact of addiction on law enforcement.

You can read about the history of Angels in Motion at: [Angels in Motion | Changing the way those suffering with the disease of addiction are treated, one life at a time. \(aimangelsinmotion.org\)](http://aimangelsinmotion.org)

March 17th at 7 pm – Racism in America: The Native American Experience.

Dr. Daryl Thorne, Assistant Professor of Human Relations at Trinity University in Washington, DC will help us understand the real-world impact of US Native American policy over the past 400 years.



April 21st at 7 pm - Climate Change in NJ and What We're Doing About It.

Sea level rise, changing weather patterns, and human actions are taking their toll on the New Jersey coastal plain. This panel discussion, led by Virginia Rettig, Refuge Manager of Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, will highlight the biggest challenges we face, and share what our scientists are doing to "stem the tide."

Corresponding Secretary

Kris Baker

Kristinabaker2014@gmail.com

As Corresponding Secretary, each month I mail out The Forum to members who need a paper copy in the mail.



I also send cards by mail to members for: Get Well, Thank You, Sympathy on the death of a member or someone in the member's family who has passed away. Just send me an email message if you know of someone you would like to receive a card on behalf of AAUW.

STEM

Gail Davis

ghdath@comcast.net

Given the ongoing uncertainty of how public health authorities will handle vaccinations for minors, Tech Trek New Jersey will take place 100% virtually this year. We will hold a virtual Meet and Greet for campers selected in 2020 on May 15 to prepare them for participation in Camp July 18-24, 2021.



Camp Director, Ann Marchesani has JUST received the Memorandum of Understanding from National and is carefully reviewing it before February 7th deadline. Once that is done we will follow up with additional details to the selected campers' families and our volunteers.

Given these circumstances we will NOT select a 2021 cohort of campers. This saddens me greatly and I hope we can return to 'regular' procedures for 2022. I am hopeful that more detailed information will be available for the March Forum.

Public Policy

Jenine Brown

Jb1nj@aol.com

Two of the AAUW focus areas, Economics and Health, continue to collide in the life of New Jerseyans. Governor Murphy has committed to making health care more accessible and affordable for all. On January 1, he signed into law an increased minimum wage for the state. However, many of those affected are in small businesses slowed down or temporarily shuttered by the Coronavirus. Information regarding travel quarantine, resumption of indoor sports practices and competition statewide vaccination programs, including the Vaccine Mega-site in Atlantic City, continue to unfold.

In 2020 AAUW activists sent over 60,000 letters to legislators asking for action on our priorities. AAUW remains focused on creating an equitable environment for everyone.

Source: NJ.gov/Office of the Governor; AAUW.org

Community Foundation of SJ

Lois Fried

loissfried@gmail.com

As we all know, the stock market continues on a roller coaster ride. Our conservatively placed Trust Fund has a balance of almost \$62,000.

**Facebook**

Karen Poorman

karenpoormansjawe@gmail.com

Some information and hints concerning protecting yourself from email hacks and Facebook cloning are posted on our closed group page on Facebook. "Like" the open Facebook page (AAUW Atlantic County Branch) and join the closed group which is members only (AAUW Atlantic members).



Closed group Facebook page. Every AAUW-AC member on Facebook should join. To join, go to "AAUW Atlantic Members," answer the questions and you will be sent an invitation if

you are a member. *Conversation is welcome.* It is a social/informational page for members of the Atlantic County Branch and members need to be involved to keep it active.

There is also a public page. "AAUW Atlantic County Branch." You can "like" the page and receive notifications when something is posted. That page can be seen by everyone. It should deal with AAUW Atlantic business only. If you submit a picture of anyone, be certain that they have approved it. We generally do not put names on the public site.

Items of Interest

AAUW National Art Contest

Are you a passionate painter? A skillful sketch artist? Do you have a great eye for photography? If so, AAUW is offering the perfect opportunity for you to show off your artistic talents — by submitting to the 12th annual art contest!



In the art world women are underrepresented and undervalued. Only a third of artists represented by commercial galleries are women and women working in arts professions are paid on average 74 cents to every dollar paid to men. This is what motivates AAUW to host an annual art contest — to give women artists the attention they deserve.

Are you an AAUW member with a passion for creating works of art? This year's contest begins on January 6 with entries accepted through February 3. Voting opens on February 10 and will close on March 3. The six winning entries will be featured in a collection of notecards mailed to AAUW members in the spring. Please consult the contest rules below for helpful tips on ensuring a quality entry. We look forward to seeing your works of art this year! Link: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/art-contest/>

AAUW-AC Submissions include:

- Carol Zerbe, "Spring Floral" "It is a watercolor with two very bright yellow flowers centered in a vertical presentation."
- Arlene Groch, "Hidden Woman 1" She describes it as "The joy of abstract impressionist painting is that the viewer controls the message. Women's lives were hidden for far too long. Find yours in my paintings."

Consider entering your own work and please go online and look for our submissions.

INTEREST GROUPS

Book Group

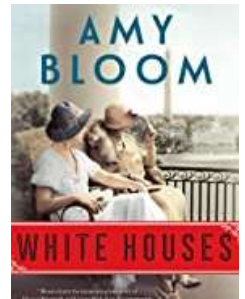
Mary Lou Breidenstine

breidensti@aol.com

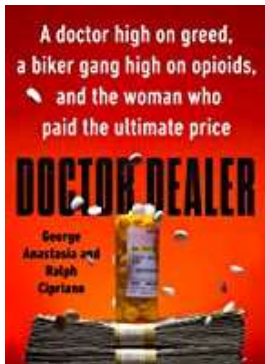


Join the Book Group and Terry Dailey in the discussion of "The Good Lord Bird" by James McBride. **Friday, February 12** at 10:30 on Zoom, Carolyn Bassett will send the link. This novel traces the "militant abolitionist John Brown's doomed ride to Harpers Ferry." It is also available as a miniseries on Showtime. This novel approaches a very serious subject with a great deal of humor and yet stays true to the history.

On **Friday, March 26**, Carolyn will lead the group's discussion of "White Houses" by Amy Bloom. This novel chronicles the relationship of Eleanor Roosevelt and journalist Lorena Hickok. Amy Bloom happened to come upon a cache of letters written by both ladies and developed the letters into a compelling novel. This novel is also "true to the History."



In April Gail Vreeland will tackle "Dr. Dealer" by George Anastasia. This book is sure to provoke lots of discussion as it is the story of the murder of April Kauffman.



And our final read for the year will be poetry. Which poetry? TBA.

Please send me an email if you would like to join our discussions.

Film Group

Terry Dailey

johnd4photo@aol.com



Please continue to wear masks and social distance so that, hopefully, we can see each other at the theater sometime in 2021. If you would like to be included on our email list of interesting movies to watch at home, please send me an email.

For A More Equal Society

Carolyn Bassett

geoca41@gmail.com

We will meet Thursday February 11 at 1pm. At the last meeting, Caren Fitzpatrick, one of our County Commissioners, attended and gave us some background on some of the issues surrounding ACIT and public school districting. Next month members should watch the following video - an interview with Nikole Hannah-Jones about putting her daughter in a public school in New York City that many middle-class parents would avoid. (Ms. Hannah-Jones writes for the NY Times. She is the author of the 1619 Project.)



Here is the link: <https://youtu.be/6hmfHisBM7Y?t=92>

When you come to the meeting, (on ZOOM) bring suggestions on follow-up and what to do next. If you are not already a member of this group and would like to participate, contact me and I will send you an invitation.

Tutors for Educational Equity

Virginia Rettig

rettigva@yahoo.com

Did you know that 95% of teachers in Atlantic County identify as white? We have work to do if we hope for students to see more of themselves in their teachers. In January, the team met to develop a Needs list and plan for 2021. We are working on a more formal package that can be handed to prospective tutors to guide them as they start up. We are excited to see what 2021 brings to this newly formed AAUW initiative! Contact Virginia Rettig at rettigva@yahoo.com if you are interested in tutoring.



Conversational Spanish

Jeannette Flax

jcflax@yahoo.com

Hola, ¿Cómo estás?

Our surprisingly interesting conversations on Mondays from 4:00 to 6:00 are helping us maintain our fluency and increase our vocabulary. Our technological experts are continuing to make our Zoom meetings of the conversation group happen! We get together every Monday from 4:00 to 6:00. If you'd like to join us, please contact me via e-mail or phone (609) 653-6177. I'll always know if we are meeting or not.

Travel Group

Carolyn Bassett

geoca41@gmail.com



The Travel Group will not meet in February. We enjoyed an interesting program with beautiful scenery on the Delaware and Raritan Canal presented by Kit Lok and husband Mike Olan in January. Kit prepared a list of possible day trips in the tri-state area. It includes parks, gardens, and historic places and I can share it with you. Also, I would be very happy to have someone volunteer to present another program in March. Send me an email for more information.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER:

Mondays	4 pm	Conversational Spanish	Jeanette Flax
Feb 11 Thursday	1:00 pm	For a More Equal Society	Carolyn Bassett
Feb 11 Thursday	3:00 pm	AAUW National Webinar Creating a Diversity Structure and Planning for Success	Arlene Groch
Feb 12 Friday	10:30 am	Book Discussion Good Lord Bird	Mary Lou Breidenstine
Feb 17 Wednesday	7:00 pm	Branch Meeting So You Think It Can't Happen To Your Family: The Drug Crisis in Atlantic County	Arlene Groch
Mar 17 Wednesday	7:00 pm	Branch Meeting Racism in America: The Native American Experience	Arlene Groch
Mar 26 Friday	10:30 am	Book Discussion White Houses	Mary Lou Breidenstine
Apr 17 Wednesday	7:00 pm	Branch Meeting Climate Change in NJ and What We're Doing About It	Arlene Groch