



Atlantic County (NJ) Branch

# THE NEWSLETTER

December 2021

Vol. 121 no. 04

**PROMOTING WOMEN'S EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION FOR OVER 100 YEARS**

**GLAD TIDINGS OF JOY FOR THE NEW YEAR!**



## President's Message

Jackie Shelley-Tasoff

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Dear Friends,

One of our December AAUW traditions is to collect WAWA gift cards and donate them to AVANZAR (Atlantic County Women's Center). They give these cards to women who've secured employment, but lack the money to buy gasoline to drive to work.



**AVANZAR**  
SAFETY, JUSTICE, EMPOWERMENT

**EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES**  
*Formerly The Women's Center*

This year as a token of our appreciation for your generosity throughout 2021, the Board of Officers decided to donate \$250 in gift cards on your behalf. More information on the efforts of AVANZAR can be found on their website, [here](#).



Carolyn Bassett, Gretchen Braunwarth, Mary Lou Breidenstine, Tula Christopoulos, Jeannette Flax, Lisa Goodwin, Ann-Maria Guevara, Linda Karp, Lynne Walters, Kathy Zeigenfus, Carol Zerbe

The women pictured above have given a large measure of their time on the Program Committee and as leaders of our Interest Groups. Some of them work on other committees and on the Board as well!

Since April 2020, the Program Committee has held monthly events ranging from the serious and important topics of Systematic Racism and Climate Change to the fun-summer topics of potting container plants and stress-free grilling. They've kept us connected via Zoom, which required double the work of holding dress rehearsals and using the new Zoom technology. Through it all, Program VP, Tula Christopoulos remained a patient and enthusiastic leader with the help of Carolyn, Mary Lou, Lisa, Linda, Kathy and Carol as well as Shelley Cohen and Jill Slotoroff (not pictured).

One of the many things I've learned since May is how important our Interest Groups are to our Branch. They serve as an "introduction" to AAUW-AC for prospective members and provide an opportunity for new members to be welcomed into our community of engaged and caring women. My thanks to Carolyn, Gretchen, Mary Lou, Jeannette, Ann-Maria, and Lynne for their flexibility and continued hospitality during this tumultuous year.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge and thank Terry Dailey (wearing the movie star sunglasses) for her work as leader of the Film Group. She brought joy and comradery to many of our members over several years.

When we meet again in-person, I hope you'll share your gratitude to all the people mentioned here for their efforts on your behalf.

**Look for the next Newsletter on February 1st** to find out what the Program Committee and Interest Groups have planned for 2022!

Until then, all my best wishes to you, your family and friends during this holiday season.

Jackie





**MudGirls Studios**  
November 23 at 12:25 PM · 🌐

Our NEW Icy Blue Snowflake Ornament ❄️ For more precious gifts like this, come see us at our Holiday Sale on December 4th!

We will be at Reed's Organic Farm (@reedsorganicfarm), in Egg Harbor Township, from 10am-3pm 🌲 ✨

REPOST • @langs\_garden

We carry the most wonderful handmade ornaments from @mudgirlsstudios. When you purchase from MudGirls Studios, not only are you supporting local you're also improving the lives of disadvantaged women in Atlantic City by supporting their craft and providing a fair, supplemental income. Take a peek at our stories to see what else we have.



Consider supporting Mudgirls Studios from our October program. Their wares will be available for purchase at Reed's Organic Farm in EHT on Dec. 4 from 10am to 3pm. The website <https://www.mudgirlsstudios.org/> also has beautiful options for gift giving and a link for donations.



### Atlantic County Board of Election News

The Board of Elections has completed the statutorily required Audit and it showed NO discrepancies and there has been no call for any re-count.

The 2020 Census will require drawing new voting boundary lines. The Board of Elections is responsible for approving all municipal wards that require new boundary lines. There will be an open public meeting of the Board, in person and by ZOOM, on Tuesday, December 14th at 5:30 p.m. to report those municipalities which will have Ward modifications.



Lynn Caterson  
Attorney At Law  
Board of Elections Chairperson

### Membership Vice President

Kristina Baker

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Please welcome to the AAUW-Atlantic County Branch two new members: Mary Lou Stephano and Theresa Basquez.

The AAUW National Rooster has our Branch listed as 130 members. Each year, some members do not renew and in talking to some they mentioned work, family demands, and health issues for their decision. This last year proved difficult connecting with members mainly on zoom. Some of our interest groups are now meeting in person but the safety and health of our members is of importance.

I continue to mail printed copies of your Newsletter to members who don't have internet access.

If you know of a member who you'd like me to send a Get Well, Sympathy or Thank You card please let me know.

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## Fundraising Officer

Kathy Zeigenfus

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The importance of fundraising has never been more apparent to me as it is now. Our efforts have helped buy materials for the Tutors for Educational Equity and support our Scholarship Program and Tech Trek. The generosity of you, the members, has been overwhelming and is much appreciated.

Thank you  
for your  
generosity!

We reported the success of our Boscov's Friends Helping Friends program with almost \$450.00 collected. Workbooks for Praxis practice have already been purchased and distributed to both mentors and students.

Our second, "No Calorie Luncheon," is still bringing in checks. The totals will be reported in the new year and we are very encouraged by the generosity of our members and others who support our programs.

On November 17, our committee hosted the Zoom meeting entitled, "All the Good We Do!" We enjoyed a variety of speakers including Karen Poorman, chairperson of the Scholarship Committee, Jean McAllister, Chief of Staff and Chief Advancement Officer at ACCC, and Kris Baker, chairperson of the Membership Committee. The highlights of the evening were testimonials from this year's recipient of the Dr. Jo France's Stow Memorial Scholarship, Brianna Torres, former participants of Tech Trek, Zoe Rosenberg and Ashley Conant, and a parent, Gina Roche. She reflected on the importance and significance of Tech Trek for her daughter, Zoe Rosenberg, who is now an Astro-physics major at Rutgers University. Our program concluded with an informative and entertaining video of Tech Trek in action.

As we approach the new year, 2022, we will see the benefits of our fundraising efforts. We will continue to plan for new ways to raise funds for our very important programs and welcome ideas from any of our members! Happy New Year and many thanks from the fundraising committee.

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## Tutors for Educational Equity

Virginia Rettig

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This month we held the first of a two-part workshop for new tutors. All participants were AAUW members. We are currently tutoring six clients, and another just passed the Praxis Math. She is now eligible to be a full-time teacher in New Jersey. Also, we distributed the practice guides to all new tutors. The second tutoring workshop session is on December 11. If you are interested in joining, please contact me for details on material covered in session one.

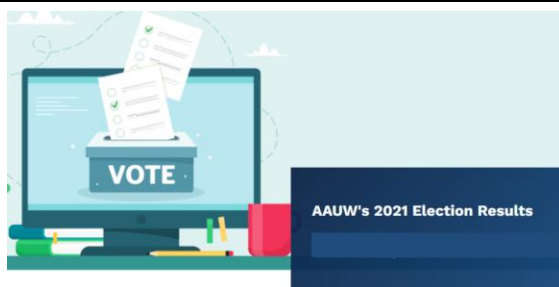
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## Public Policy

Jenine Brown

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Election 2021 is mostly complete, perhaps leaving some AAUW members hopeful, surprised or confused with the results. Our democracy works when everyone can fully participate. Elected officials routinely make decisions about issues that directly impact all of us. Participating in elections is a way for all to contribute to policies and legislation that may affect our future. Our organization's policy states "AAUW is committed to open and fair elections, nonpartisan voter education efforts that will promote equitable political participation...". Our community will change as needed if members (1) become familiar with trending issues, (2) give extra thought to matters which affect our families, then (3) learn about candidates who will put the best course of action to work. Engaging in this way is an ongoing thing, the next election will be taking place shortly.

Tallies show AAUW 2021 election has resulted in Julia Brown's re-election as AAUW board chair for three more years. Also, the ballot initiative to eliminate the membership requirement got 63% of the vote, which was just below the two-thirds majority needed to enact a bylaw change. Sources: [AAUW.org](https://www.aauw.org)

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## INTEREST GROUPS

### Explorer's Interest Group

Kristina Baker

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The first meeting of the new Explorers Interest Group was held on Friday November 19. We visited the ACUA (Atlantic County Utilities Authority) on Absecon Blvd. Atlantic City). Alexis Demitroff, Public Education and Outreach gave a free tour. We put on hard hats and stood under one of five wind turbines and saw several treatment basins up close. We learned about renewable energy, how wastewater is treated and how wind turbines generate electricity.



The December adventure for the Explorer's Group will be to the Atlantic County Veterans Museum ([link here](#)) on Thursday December 16 at 1:30. The museum is located at 189 Route 50 South, Mays Landing. Aedan McBride from the museum will give us a tour explaining the military artifacts and personal memorabilia of Atlantic County residents and

their contributions to our nation's history. The tour will last about an hour with an extra half hour available if members want to spend more time looking over the displays.

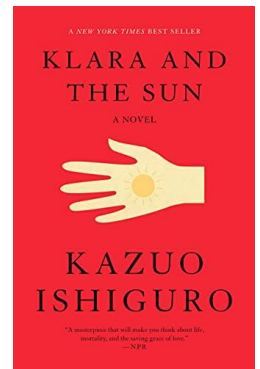
Please, let me know by Monday December 13 if you plan to attend so that I can let the museum prepare for our visit.

### Book Group

Mary Lou Breidenstine

breidensti@aol.com

The next book group will be a discussion of "Klara and the Sun" by Kazuo Ishiguro, led by Gail Vreeland. The meeting is planned for Friday, Dec. 10 and is tentatively scheduled for the Linwood Library. The room is quite spacious and several events have been held there recently with no ill effects as far as I know. Some participants have told me that they will not attend in-door meetings, while others will not participate in Zoom meetings. I am trying to maintain a balance. I have not yet set dates for the other meetings, although a few of them will definitely be on Zoom.

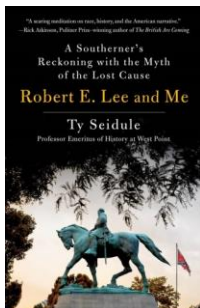


Please contact me for the schedule of books if you are interested in joining us.

### For A More Equal Society

Carolyn Bassett

geoca41@gmail.com



We have started reading and discussing "Robert E Lee and Me" by Ty Seidule. He is a professor emeritus of West Point and a retired brigadier general when he retired from the US Army after 36 years of service. The book discusses "the Myth of the Lost Cause" which he, as a Virginian and graduate of Washington and Lee University, was steeped in. On Thursday, December 1 by Zoom at 1pm we will discuss the introduction and chapter 1 of the book. Please let Carolyn know if you plan to attend (but come anyway if you forget).

Recently we have been talking about the Rosenwald schools which were established throughout the South from 1912 to 1932 for African American children by a partnership between Julius Rosenwald (CEO of Sears) and Booker T Washington.

Nearly 5,000 schools served Black students across the South until Brown vs. the Board of Education ended the "separate but equal" doctrine. We were impressed to learn about the extent of these schools whose graduates include Maya Angelou, John Lewis, and Medgar Evers.



Our small but enthusiastic group continues Mondays from 4:00 to 6:00 via Zoom, thanks to two technology expert members. We discuss music, movies, TV shows and share our language learning experiences. Please contact me if you'd care to join us (609) 653-6177.

**Ethnic Cuisines**

Ann-Maria Guevara

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Greetings, Ethnic Cuisine participants! This is an announcement regarding our upcoming Holiday Potluck. Cook up your favorite ethnic dish and join us at Gretchen's home, 36 Caledonia Drive, Seaville, at noon on Thursday, Dec. 16 for a celebration of the season. (Celebratory beverages are also welcome!)



We'll send out another reminder in early December. Meanwhile, please let Gretchen or me know what you will bring. (As Arlene wisely noted at our recent lunch at Mambo, we don't want to end up with 6 types of potato latkes!) Hope to see you all there. If you have any questions, just email us!

**Travel Group**

Carolyn Bassett

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The December Travel group will meet Wednesday, Dec 8 by Zoom at 1pm. Mary and Phil Ingraham will present their trip to Scotland and England they have titled **STANDING STONES PART II**. Some of you may remember that the Ingraham's traveled with archeologists once before to investigate these Neolithic structures of which Stonehenge is the most well-known example. This time they started in the Orkney Islands and visited sites they hadn't seen before as well as re-visiting others. Join us to learn more about these fascinating structures.

Please let Carolyn know if you plan to come.

**UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER:**

Mondays	4:00 pm Zoom	<b>Conversational Spanish</b>	Jeanette Flax
Dec 1 Wednesday	1:00 pm Zoom	<b>For a More Equal Society</b>	Carolyn Bassett
Dec 8 Wednesday	1:00 pm Zoom	<b>Travel Group</b> Standing Stones II	Carolyn Bassett
Dec 10 Friday	10:30 am TBD	<b>Book Group</b> Klara and the Sun	Mary Lou Breidenstine
Dec 11 Saturday	10:00 am Zoom	<b>Tutors for Educational Equity Workshop</b>	Virginia Rettig
Dec 16 Thursday	Noon Seaville, NJ	<b>Ethnic Cuisine Holiday Potluck</b>	Ann-Maria Guevara
Dec 16 Thursday	1:30 pm On-Site	<b>Explorer's Interest Group</b> Atlantic County Veterans Museum	Kris Baker
Jan 10 Monday	7:00 pm Zoom	<b>Board of Officers Meeting</b>	Jackie Shelley-Tasoff