



Atlantic County (NJ) Branch

THE NEWSLETTER

September 2022

Vol. 122 no. 01

PROMOTING WOMEN'S EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION FOR OVER 100 YEARS

WELCOME BACK!



President's Message

Jackie Shelley-Tasoff

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Dear Friends,

Because there's so much to read in this issue about our plans for September and beyond, I'll give you the highlights of our summer activities. Here's what's new for our Branch:

In May we held our installation of new Board Officers in Cape May at the Blue Pig Tavern. Please welcome Joan Leavy, Board Secretary and Therese Basquez, STEM Officer.



After the installation, we toured the Harriet Tubman Museum (see the photos above and left) and learned about the history of Cape May's Black Community.

Later in May and in July, we held our STEM Camps. For the first time in several years, we had articles published in the AC Press and the Ocean City Sentinel thanks to our Public Information Officer Janet Yunghans.



You'll find links to the above articles by clicking on the green email button labeled May STEM Camp for the AC Press article and the button labeled July STEM Camp for the article in the Ocean City Sentinel.



Therese Sartorio graciously offered to revive our commitment to volunteer as ushers at the Stockton's Children's Theater.

And Valerie Koob started a new Interest Group called The Salon. Last month we read and discussed an article in the NY Times titled "The Battle Over Gender Therapy" that documented the experiences of two dozen young people and also provided important medical, social and psychological information gathered in the field since the 1970s. It was a pleasure to learn more on this topic and to listen to the diversity of opinions.



I hope you'll continue reading to discover more about our Interest Groups and Committees and what they have planned to enrich our lives.

Best wishes,

Jackie

Program Vice President

Tula Christopoulos

tegea222@gmail.com

Wednesday, September 21st, at 6 pm at the Linwood Library, we welcome back members and guests for a dinner and presentation appropriate for kicking off our new year of programming. Alison Strittmatter will discuss **Self-care: Towards a More Peaceful You.**



Alison Strittmatter

Beat the pandemic blahs by learning how you can nourish your body, improve digestion, form a healthier relationship with food & help your body heal in a nonjudgmental and supportive manner. Look for the flyer soon & RSVP to Mary Lou Breidenstine (609) 927-1779 before September 16th. Let us know if you will attend dinner & the program starting at 6 pm. Or, just the program, starting at 7 pm. In either case, the evening is free of charge to members and guests.

Details also coming soon on an October lunch and visit to the Alice Paul Institute, Mt. Laurel, NJ. The tour covers where Alice Paul got her inspiration during her childhood at Paulsdale to later advocate for equality and become one of the major figures in the women's suffrage movement.

The Program Committee meets once a month to research, organize and present monthly branch meetings which feature guest speakers on topics relevant to current social, political and cultural issues. New ideas for future programs are welcome for discussion from all of our members.

Membership Vice President

Kristina Baker

kristinabaker2014@gmail.com



Over the summer, we had several women join our chapter. We welcome each of you!

Meryl Baer, Ventnor Susan Rasera, Absecon Shirley Belitsky, Ventnor Kathleen Alken, Voorhees

Our Interest Group options are expanding. This past year, we added the Explorer Group, and this summer The Salon started. Information on both can be found below. We have a **Proposed New Interest Group: Documentary/Short Movie**: An organizational meeting is scheduled for Friday September 30 from 1:30 to 2:30 at the Linwood Library. Each month a facilitator will lead the discussion of a short movie or documentary the group has watched either individually at home or in a group setting. Questions about this new group can be directed to Kris Baker either by email (above) or phone - 609-602-4467.

All Interest Groups are open to all members and their guests. It is important that you contact the facilitator of the Interest Groups you'd like to join. This way each facilitator can add you to their Interest Group email list so that you'll receive important group updates. You can find a description of each Interest Group below and a calendar of all our activities can be found at the end of this Newsletter.

Scholarship Officer

Karen Poorman

karenpoormansjawe@gmail.com

Scholarships for 2022

\$3,000 to Stockton was awarded to Van Nhi Ho who is minoring in Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies.

\$1,000 to ACCC to be awarded a part time student who lives in Atlantic County

\$2,000 was awarded to ACCC which was used as follows:

\$1,000 to Annabele Corpus of Egg Harbor Township, Liberal Arts - Secondary Education major

\$1,000 was awarded to Christian Gonzalez of Atlantic City, Liberal Arts - Performing Arts major.

\$2,000 was given to Salem Community College for Celeste Tsang in the Scientific Glassblowing major.

\$300 to Alicia Petrany from Rowan University for a Scholarship for NCCWSL. National Conference for College Women Student Leaders awarded by NJ State AAUW.

Over the years \$50,000+ has been donated by our Branch for scholarships to ACCC. A request has been made to Stockton University for the history of our scholarship awards. Most recipients have written emails and letters thanking AAUW members for their generosity. If contact information on our past recipients can be obtained, we'll follow up to learn where they are today and what impact the scholarships had on their future.



Stockton scholarship recipient Kaylee Heslin with Jackie and Virginia May 2022

Facebook

Karen Poorman

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What you need to know about our presence on Facebook: There is an AAUW Atlantic Page and an AAUW Atlantic Group. The **Page** can be read by everyone and anyone can join it. The **Group** is members only and can only be seen by members. Fifty of our members are having daily discussions, posting information, photos and updates on our activities on the group page.



Join Facebook. Go to Facebook.com and click "Create New Account." Enter the information they ask for. Click "Sign Up." To finish creating your account, you need to confirm your email or mobile phone number.

Once that is done, type "AAUW Atlantic Members" in the Facebook search bar. It will bring you to a screen that will ask if you are a member. I will receive a request from you and will approve you. That is the closed group page. You can "like" the AAUW Atlantic County Branch page.

It is good to "like" or post on Facebook at least occasionally because inactive accounts are the ones that tend to get hacked, so post on our group page. I hope to hear from you soon.



AAUW-AC partnered with Stockton University to offer a "Steminist" summer program for 34 high school girls throughout NJ who were alumni of the July 2018 through 2021 camps. The program included science workshops and fun activities such as wearing STEMINIST t-shirts, chemistry and biomedical labs, robotics, physics, polyhedron

origami, interview role play, e-sports and on-campus trips to observe the stars through a telescope, maple trees and syrup evaporator, and sustainable farming fields.

The hard work and long hours by the STEM Camp Leadership Team were instrumental to the success of our camps: Ann Marchesani, Linda Harmon and Gail Davis from Atlantic County AAUW, Stockton University's Dean of Education and AAUW member, Claudine Keenan, as well as Sharon Suber AAUW of NJ VP of Communications and President of AAUW – Burlington County and Jean McAllister, member and Executive Director of Atlantic Cape Community College Foundation.



Volunteers from our Branch also included: Kristina Baker, Carolyn Bassett, Theresa Basquez, Shelley Cohen, Kathy Ghanavati, Virginia Rettig, Bev Schectman, Joan Vicari, Kathy Zeigenfus and Carol Zerbe.

We're grateful to all of the volunteers who helped provide girls with opportunities to become aware of possibilities not previously imagined. As one camper who attended STEM Camp in 7th Grade said: "STEM Camp changed my life."



Diversity Officer

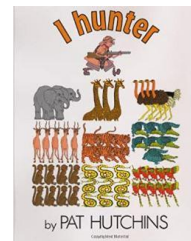
Sharone Brown-Jackson

brownjackson@aol.com

Let us say a silent prayer for the victims of the school massacre that occurred at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas on Tuesday, May 24, 2022; I remain shocked, stunned, stymied by the brutality and evilness that continues to run rampant in our Tik Tok society.



I have taught Pre-kindergarten to children ages 3-4 years old for twenty years. This May we explored the ZOO theme in preparation for our trip to the Cape May ZOO. I have a book that has been in my classroom library for 20 years titled *1 Hunter* by renowned children's author, Pat Hutchins. It is a splendid counting book of wild animals and for the very first time, I experienced a hard view of our present generation. The Hunter character is a man carrying a gun who meets various wild animals that allow a young Scholar to count to ten. However, half of my fifteen Scholars (seven African-American, eight Latino) raised their hand after seeing the first page illustration of the Hunter with his gun to tell me, "My Daddy has a gun!" To say the least, I was flabbergasted and had to make an instant decision to only display the pictures of the animals as I continued to read this simple story. I did manage to ask how the Hunter was feeling according to the scared and surprised look on his face as he encountered all the animals. I was in utter disbelief as to how comfortable my Scholars felt when telling me about the availability of guns in their individual households and how uncomfortable I felt in receiving this knowledge. But this is definitely a sign of the "new urban order" as we return to a new normal after Covid – of diversity and inclusion.



I had the privilege of talking with one of my Scholars from 20 years ago when he was 4 years old and is now 24 years old; he remembered my reading this book to him and his classmates but with no reaction to the Hunter's gun. This led me to think should I personally ban this book? Stop reading it? I don't believe in banning any book so I may have to take a second look at my classroom library inventory!



We are again looking forward to our Annual Scholarship Fundraiser. We have decided to act with caution once more and will have a virtual meeting on Thursday, November 17, 2022. You can expect an invitation in the next month with details of our exciting fundraiser with some surprises and lots of fun. We raised close to \$8,000 last year and hope to match or surpass that as the need for scholarships continues.

A drawing for restaurant gift cards or items will be part of our program to be chosen from our members who contribute to the fundraiser. We are asking you to approach local restaurants and businesses for donations. A form is included to this email as a button Donation form for Businesses. It is with great appreciation that we ask this of you, our dedicated members.



We will participate once again with the Bosco's Friends Helping Friends Program. Last year, we were able to use the proceeds to purchase practice books for the students in the Tutors for Educational Equality Program. We will have coupons available for \$5.00 apiece at our September meeting. These coupons allow great discounts shopping at Bosco's on October 19. You can pick up a few for family and friends, save a lot of money shopping and help our students in the tutoring program.

Public Policy Officer

Jenine Brown

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For many, the month of September incorporates activities that signal a return to learning. The US and many other countries require some level of mandatory education, giving millions access to free K-12 education.

But what about free or low-cost access to higher education? What does access to higher learning really mean? Many people have dreams or goals that require education beyond the basics for movement into positions that are built upon higher learning levels. Without the terms 'free' or 'low cost', opportunities for use of talent and/or goal achievement are disrupted. This is particularly true for women. Women hold two-thirds of education debt, an amount that totals more than \$900 billion, an [analysis](#) of federal data by the American Association of University Women shows (The Washington Post April 3, 2022).



In April 2022 President Biden extended the 2-year-old reprieve for student loan repayment introduced during the pandemic. Still, with the ever-increasing costs of under- and post-graduate work, there is a call for change in a system that leaves women overburdened by debt. Black women and other minority women often carry more student debt. Due to the gender pay gap, women earn 83 cents for every dollar paid to men; student debt repayment is more prolonged and burdensome for women and families.

New Jersey Governor Murphy's education initiative states "money should never be a barrier to students who have the ability and drive to go to college, which is why he will work towards making community college free and four-year college more affordable".

In late August 2022, the President announced fulfillment of a campaign promise, cancelling \$10,000 in student debt for those earning less than \$125,000. The move has been deemed unfair by some. Critics say it is helpful but not enough.

Our Tutors for Educational Equity (TEE) program is an exciting way for our members to support people that wish to become certified teachers. We focus on assisting people in Atlantic County, but we offer our services to anyone seeking support. Only about 5% of teachers are people of color. We seek a more equitable distribution of teachers in our schools.



Virginia Rettig, Quiana Lewis, Rona Kaplan
October 2021

To assist, AAUW volunteers work with clients to help them pass the required Praxis test that is needed to be certified to teach in the State of New Jersey. Teachers need to, at a minimum, pass the Reading, Writing, and Mathematics course, and we tutor them for success. We also raise funds and seek grants to provide study aides and pay for testing fees.

Over the summer several tutors continued working with clients. This can be a busy time as prospective teachers are often running out of time if they are a “conditional hire” and need to complete their tests prior to the new school year. We are always looking for tutors and encourage you to give it a try. It can be as little as eight or so hours each year! Contact Virginia at rettigva@yahoo.com for more information.

Have you renewed your AAUW Membership for 2022?

If not, look for the ***How to Renew Your Membership Email*** with instructions and helpful hints to be sent on September 7th.

INTEREST GROUPS

Explorers Group

Kristina Baker

kristinabaker2014@gmail.com



The Explorer Interest Group is a group for members who gather to visit interesting and educational locations in the area. All members are welcome to join any of our monthly trips. We usually schedule our outings on the 4th Friday of each month in the afternoon. We hope you will join us! We met three times over the summer. Additional pictures posted by participants are available on our group's Facebook page.

On June 24 we visited the Ralph Silver Fox Alpacas in Egg Harbor City. Some of the group fed the animals and we were able to pat them while learning about these wonderful creatures. We then went to Swan Bay Folk Art Center in Port Republic. Niki Giberson, mayor of the town explained the raising of sheep along with wool weaving. We walked around her farm and learned the history of many skilled crafts. The picture above shows us all gathered together.



The July 22 trip was to see the artist Eduardo Jimenez. He showed us the trash that he had picked up on the beach just that morning. What a pile of plastic and debris he collected! The artist then explained and shared with us his creative process in producing beautiful artwork from those items. Several examples are posted on our Facebook page.

August 26 brought us to The Skimmer boat outing in Cape May. We toured the coastal salt marsh and saw up close many interesting examples of sea life including rock weeds, mummichogs, a spider horseshoe and striped hermit crab, sea star and knobbed whelk. In the rafters, as we passed under a bridge, we saw a peregrine falcon. We also saw a bald eagle catch a laughing gull in his talons.



From right: Theresa Basquez, Barbara Heinrichs and guest of Kris Baker, Rosemary



From left: Beverly Schectman, Carolyn Bassett, Tula Christopoulos and Linda Harmon

Continued...



Upcoming Explorer's Group outings

Friday September 23 from 1:30 to 3:00. Nancy Rubin has arranged for us to visit the Samuel and Jean Jones Glass Education Center at Salem Community College in Carney's Point NJ where our Branch donated Scholarship dollars.

This tour is not the same as tours given at Wheaton Glass in Millville. We will learn about scientific glass technology which prepares students to create glass apparatus for scientific research in laboratories, universities, and industry. We will also explore the Glass Arts Studio to see flameworking, glass blowing, kiln casting, fusing and slumping and cold construction technologies. The school offers dual programs in scientific glass and creative glass. Their scientific glass program is the only accredited scientific glass program in the US. Carpooling can be arranged.

Friday October 28 at 1:00. Tula Christopoulos has arranged for a tour of the Constanelos Hellenic Collection and Reading Room at Stockton University (Galloway campus). The tour will include the special exhibit "The Greek War of Independence Through American Eyes". This exhibit is timely. Since ancient times, the language, culture, and values of the Hellenes (Greeks) has impacted the world which has adopted and assimilated the values and aesthetics of the (Greeks) including the concept of democracy.



If you are interested it is important to RSVP to me, Kris Baker via cell: 609-602-4467 or email: Kristinabaker2014@gmail.com. In that way you will receive updates during the month of the trip.

The Salon Group

Valerie Koob

vkoob@aol.com

A new discussion group, formed from the Great Decisions group. Members meet monthly to discuss a timely issue or a philosophical question. The Facilitator chooses the topic and prepares, in advance, some questions to pose at the meeting. The Facilitator may choose to describe the topic and supply some reading material in advance of the meeting, or for the more philosophical issues, may instead announce the topic to the group at the meeting and pose questions to the group, much as the salons in Paris operated years ago. There are no right or wrong answers, and we are not searching for a consensus. The discussion is the point!

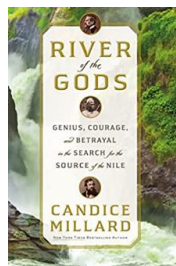
Meeting Info:

- We will meet the second Monday of the month at the Margate Library, from 2:30-3:30PM.
- Meeting dates: 9/12, 10/10, 11/14, 12/12, 1/9, 2/13, 3/13.
- We will not meet during April and May when Great Decisions will be meeting.
- We encourage all members to volunteer to be a Facilitator at least once.
- We agreed that the Facilitator will review their topic with the group leader, Valerie Koob, in advance, to make sure the topic is appropriate. Generally, we want to examine issues or events of national or international significance as well as questions of a philosophical nature. We want to avoid local/parochial issues. We want to talk about the big ideas!
- Valerie will email the group each month with topic info and copies of any reading material the Facilitator may want to use, or if the Facilitator prefers, the topic will be announced at the meeting, and the email will simply be a reminder and a request for an rsvp.
- The Facilitator's job is to develop a discussion guide, keep the discussion moving and on topic, and provide an opportunity for all members to speak.

We expect all members to:

- Listen actively
- Stay on topic
- Respect confidentiality: "What happens at the Salon stays at the Salon."
- Speak respectfully
- Be brief to allow others time to speak

Once again, please email me at VKoob@aol.com if you want to join the Salon. Thank you!



The AAUW Book Group will begin the fall season on Friday, October 7 at 10:30. Ann-Maria Guevara will lead a discussion on the Candice Millard's "River of the Gods." This non-fiction book relates the harrowing story of the mid-nineteenth century search for the mouth of the Nile. There is no lack of intrigue and betrayal in this fascinating account of obsession and quest for the unknown. Most meetings, including this one, are in the Linwood Library unless otherwise noted.

This Book Group has been meeting for almost 50 years. Several of us are original members, however we keep viable because we are always welcoming to new participants. Each season we try to maintain a variety of books that include fiction, non-fiction, biography, poetry, etc. If you would like to be on the Book Group reminder email contact Mary Lou Breidenstine at breidensti@aol.com. Hope to see you soon.

For A More Equal Society

Carolyn Bassett

geoca41@gmail.com

For a More Equal Society is a study group that meets monthly (on ZOOM) to discuss ways to foster a an understanding of issues that have and are causing inequality in our country. Our activities include reading books, listening to podcasts or videos, sometimes having a guest (in the past we have had a county commissioner and the president of the Pleasantville NAACP) and then sharing our reactions with the aim of fostering more equity.



For a More Equal Society begins with a discussion of banning books: why it's happening and how it can be stopped. There are a lot of short videos on YouTube on this subject as well as many articles. The most prevalent topics of these books are ones dealing with racism, including one for children about Ruby Bridges, and ones dealing with LGBTQ issues. This topic comes from participants' requests and you are welcome to bring other topics to the table to be explored later.

We will meet on Thursday, September 8 at 1 pm on ZOOM. Let me know via email if you want to participate and I will send you a link the day of.

Great Decisions

Lynne Walters

rrwalters321@hotmail.com



Our Great Decisions Discussion Group is an outgrowth of the Foreign Policy Association (FPA). This group helps us develop awareness and understanding of global issues. Our topics have covered many geographical areas of the world, as well as problems facing us, such as global warming, nuclear security, global migration, global health issues and others.

The format of the program includes reading a chapter of the FPA book on the issue to be discussed. There is a short film which we view on each topic before we meet for our discussion. The group forms in late March each year and has limited enrollment. An enrollment reminder will be shared here in the Newsletter.

Conversational Spanish

Jeannette Flax

jcflax@yahoo.com

Our Spanish group continues meeting Mondays from 4:00 to 6:00 via Zoom for the convenience of members who have mobility difficulties or who are away from Atlantic County. We welcome anyone who has learned Spanish at home or at school and who wants to practice. We do not use a textbook, do not do grammar exercises, but share experiences of our families, travel, hobbies, reading in a relaxed way. We help one another to improve our vocabulary and to speak fluently. If you would like to join us, please contact me at jcflax@yahoo.com or (609)653-6177.



Ethnic Cuisines

Ann-Maria Guevara
Gretchen Braunwrath

amguevara@comcast.net
gretchenb66@gmail.com



Our members are very interested in international cuisine. Throughout the year, this group meets at local ethnic restaurants to socialize and enjoy good food together. Most often, we meet for lunch; on occasion we meet for early dinner as we are doing this month.

Many thanks to Gretchen and her husband for checking out our next pick - Tara Kitchen in Wildwood where they serve “Moroccan Comfort Food From An Award-Winning Chef.” We're booked for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 15. Here's the website.

<https://www.tarakitchen.com/> The chef, Aneesa Waheed has a cookbook that can be found on Amazon. The menu looks very interesting and delicious! Hope to see you there. Please send Gretchen or Ann-Maria an email if you would like to be on the reminder list/RSVP list.



From left: Aida Colon, Gretchen Braunwrath, Carolyn Bassett, and Ann-Maria Guevara

Stockton Theater Ushers Group

Theresa Sartorio

theresasartorio@comcast.net



From left: Jan Smith, Theresa Basquez, Carolyn Bassett, Aida Colon, Bonnie Warwick, and Theresa Sartorio. August 2022

The Stockton PAC would very much like to reconnect with the AAUW and have us usher for their children's program. The first program will be Tuesday, Oct. 18th. The show will be The Wright Stuff – First in Flight. You would need to be there by 9:45. You would be finished by 12. Participants often gather for lunch



following the performance. If interested, please contact Theresa by email or call 609 287-0775.

Travel Group

Carolyn Bassett

geoca41@gmail.com

The Travel Group of AAUW explores the travels of other members who present interesting accounts of trips they have taken. Sadly, we don't organize our own trips. COVID resulted in meeting by ZOOM. The presentations are easy to do that way with simple PowerPoints or sharing of pictures and it is easy for members to “attend” - even those who now live out of the area, we are continuing to meet on ZOOM. I try to schedule a program about once a month, but I need volunteers to present. We have had presentations of overseas trips to Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Antarctica but also trips to destinations in New Jersey, the Berkshires, white-water rafting in Idaho, and West Virginia. Please let me know if you have taken an interesting trip you'd like to share with AAUW members.

The first Travel Group of the year will be on Sicily, presented by Tula Christopoulos and Judy Courter. It will meet on September 28 at 1pm on ZOOM. Here's what Tula says about it:

In May, Judy and Tula took part in a 10-day Food & Wine Tour of Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea and one of the 20 regions of Italy. Attending this presentation will give you a vicarious glimpse of its unique history, culture, wine regions and points of interest along the coastline – from Palermo to Catania.

Let Carolyn know if you'd like to attend, and she'll send you a link.



UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER:

Mondays	4:00 pm Zoom	Conversational Spanish	Jeanette Flax
Sept 8 Thursday	1:00 pm Zoom	For a More Equal Society Topic: Banning Books	Carolyn Bassett
Sept 12 Monday	2:30-3:30 pm Margate Library	The Salon Discussion Group Topic: Euthanasia	Valerie Koob
Sept 14	7 pm via Zoom	Board Meeting	Jackie Shelley-Tasoff
Sept 15 Thursday	4:00 pm Wildwood	Ethnic Cuisine Tara Kitchen	Ann-Maria Guevara Gretchen Braunwrath
Sept 21 Wednesday	6:00 pm Linwood Library	Dinner and Program Meeting Self Care: Towards a More Peaceful You	Tula Christopoulos
Sept 23 Friday	1:30 pm Carney's Point	Explorer's Group Samuel and Jean Jones Glass Education Center at Salem Community College	Kris Baker
Sept 28 Wednesday	1:00 pm Zoom	Travel Group Sicily	Carolyn Bassett
Sept 30 Friday	1:30 pm Linwood Library	Documentary/Short Film Group Organizational Meeting	Kris Baker
Oct 7 Friday	10:30 am Linwood Library	Book Group River of the Gods	Mary Lou Breidenstine
Oct 28 Friday	1:00 pm Galloway	Explorer's Group Constantelos Hellenic Collection and Reading Room at Stockton University	Kris Baker
Nov 17 Thursday	7:00 pm Via Zoom	Our Annual Fundraiser	Kathy Zeigenfus