



September 2023

Vol. 123 no. 01

PROMOTING WOMEN'S EQUITY THROUGH EDUCATION FOR OVER 100 YEARS

WELCOME BACK!

Presidents' Message



Dear AAUW Friends:

It is with pleasure that we serve as co-presidents of the Atlantic County (NJ) Branch of AAUW. Women's efforts toward advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research align with our beliefs and experiences. Both of us work extensively in the field of education and participate in organizations that promote equity, diversity, and social action, with the goal of ensuring women have opportunities to maximize their potential.

We are excited to be part of AAUW, working side by side with committee members in perpetuating AAUW's mission. We encourage

you to attend the program meetings that promise to be interesting and relevant to today's issues in our state and community. September's meeting led by Virginia Rettig will address Educational Equity. In October, we will hear from Dr. Josette Katz, Senior Vice President of Atlantic Cape Community College and Dr. Claudine Keenan, Dean of Education, and Interim Provost at Stockton University, who will enlighten us on the impact COVID has had in higher education.

Our Fund-Raising committee is selling Boscov coupons and have planned a luncheon at the Italian Gourmet in Galloway Township for November 18. Please support both efforts.

We are on hand with open lines of communication to answer questions and concerns, so do not hesitate to reach out. Our next Board meeting will be via Zoom on October 16, 2023 at 7pm. All are welcome to attend. Look for an email reminder with details as the date gets closer.

Warmest regards,

mcaliste@atlanticcape.edu Jean McAlister

Shelly Meyers sfmecllc@gmail.com

Join Us at the Linwood Library Wednesday, September 13 • 7pm

Tutors for Educational Equity

Join us to learn more about why the Atlantic County Cooperative for Educational Equity (ACCEE) was

founded, what programs the organization is leading, and how AAUW members can engage more broadly than ever before.

Date: Wed., Sept. 13, 2023

Time: 7pm

Place: Linwood Library, 301 Davis Ave., Linwood, NJ

Donation Request: Please bring some copy paper - a much needed supply for teachers. Thank you!



Virgina Rettig. **AAUW Community** Partnerships Officer



Christine Ruth, EdD, Special Education Teacher, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School Complex Atlantic City Public Schools and Founder, AC Ed



City High School.

JOIN US FOR MORE AAUW ACTIVITIES & BRING A FRIEND

October: Luncheon program at Careme's Restaurant on the campus of ACCC, Topic will be How Secondary Education Has Changed Post-COVID. Presenters will be Dr. Josette Katz, VP of Academic Affairs, ACCC and Dr. Claudine Keenan, Dean of Education, Stockton Univ.

Wed. Oct.18, 2023 • 12 noon-2pm • Luncheon cost: \$20

Visit ac-nj.aauw.net to learn more about our Special Interest Groups AAUW Book Group • Conversational Spanish • Ethnic Cuisines • For a More Equal Society • Documentary/Short Film Group

· Great Decisions Group · International Relations Group • Travel Discussion Group • Stockton: Theater Ushers Group · Local Explorers Group · The Salon - Discussion Group



Join Us on Instagram at AAUW_AC

The 2023-24 Program Planning Committee met on July 7th to discuss ideas and topics for the Fall programs. The September program will be held on **Wednesday, Sept. 13th** at 7pm in the Linwood Library. We will discuss our branch project, Tutors for Educational Equity. Presenters will be Virginia Rettig, AAUW Community Partnerships Officer,

Christine Ruh, Founder of the Atlantic City Educational Equity and Nakesha

Lawrence-Chowdhury, Business Teacher, ACHS & former client of the program. Since many of our branch have volunteered as tutors in this initiative, the program should be both educational and entertaining.

Our co-president Jean McAlister, took the lead in setting up our October program which will be a luncheon meeting at Careme's Restaurant in Atlantic Cape Community College on Wednesday, October 18th from noon to 2pm. There will be a \$20 charge for the meal.

The topic will be How Secondary Education Has Changed Post-COVID. Presenters will be Dr. Josette Katz, VP of Academic Affairs, ACCC and Dr. Claudine Keenan, Dean of Education at Stockton University. The challenges educators have faced since the pandemic have been much in the news so this discussion should be very informative.

The committee will meet again on August 30th to plan the December Holiday luncheon and to continue working on our 2024 calender of programs. There will be no January 2024 program meeting. Many thanks to all committee members for your help in setting up our fall programs.

Membership Vice President

Kristina Baker

kristinabaker2014@gmail.com

Overdue - Renew your Membership

Many members have not renewed their membership for the upcoming year. To renew, go to AAUW National (aauw.org) and follow the prompts when you log in. To join the local Atlantic County Chapter, you need to also join National and the State AAUW. There are several steps in the process and it will take you about 25 minutes to complete. If you are having problems contact Anne Carson, Linda Karp or myself. National has our membership as of August 23, 2023 consisting of 126 members. There has been discussion about starting a new interest group for members who work Monday to Friday from 9 to 5. If you are interested in this new group, contact me for details: cell- 609-602-4467 or email.



Finance Lois Fried loissfried@gmail.com

The balance in our Fund at the South Jersey Community Foundation 501 (c) 3 was \$51,321.08 on July 31, 2023. This account was started with a generous donation from a member many years ago that has been increased over the years by member donations and investment results. Our board approves distributions of funds from this endowment to supplement the fundraising we do for scholarships. In addition to your support for our fundraising projects that annually fund STEM camp and scholarships, you may also make an investment to support the scholars of the future by donating to this Fund directly.



We look forward to presenting updated information on more ways our members can support the Atlantic County Collaborative for Educational Equity at the upcoming September meeting! To date, TEE has helped teachers pass 30 certified tests. We just submitted the Interim Report to the AAUW NJ Charitable Trust for the second grant we received from them and we plan to submit a third request for \$1000 this fall.

STEM Theresa Basquez tbasquez_86@hotmail.com

At Tech Trek 2023, held at the Stockton University campus from July 23-29, thirty-five girls from many counties in NJ participated in STEM activities throughout the week. Making all that possible are those organizers who work on Tech Trek all year long: Claudine Keenan, Stockton Dean of Education and Assistant Camp Director, Jackie McGuiness and Meghan Hooper-Jackson. Heartfelt thanks to you, the generous AAUW donors who support the

program. Special thanks to all of our local Atlantic and Cape May Counties volunteers: Kristina Baker, Kathy Ghanavati, Joan Vicari and Theresa Basquez. AAUW volunteers from other NJ counties included Lauren Coyle - Morris, Nina Del Collo - Nutley - AAUW Funds Director, Marian Haag - Sussex, Liz Price - Burlington, Susan Remster - Sussex, Beverly Strickland - State affiliation, and former member Marge Coach. Other volunteers included Stockton students and Tech Trek alumni.



Truly, it takes a village.

Look for opportunities to participate in activities coming in 2024:

- Tween Tech: teachers accompany 6th-8th grade (middle school) girls to a one-day, hands-on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) field trip.
- Teentech: a one-day event designed to demonstrate that STEM education and careers are exciting, relevant, and accessible to girls and women.
- Tech Trek: one-week, residential, hands-on STEM camp for rising eighth-grade girls.

Treasurer's Report

Linda Karp

lindakarp@gmail.com

As of July 31, 2023, our checking account balance is: \$7,057.36.

Renewal reminders began a week ago for members whose membership expires through July.

This year's National dues is \$72, of which \$69 is tax deductible as a charitable contribution. The remaining \$3 is not tax deductible because it supports the AAUW Action Fund's section 501(c)4 Capitol Hill Lobby Corps and get-out-the-vote activities. Your total dues will be \$72 + state dues of \$10 + branch dues of \$10 = \$92. For those of you who are dual branch members, another \$10 will be due.

If your membership expires in August & September, you will receive your first reminder email in June. And memberships that expire in October through December will be sent their first reminder email in August. In total, each member will receive 3 reminder notices.

We hope you'll join us for another exciting year!

Women's Equality Day – Saturday, August 26, 2023. This marks the passage of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote in 1920 – though women of color remained disenfranchised until 1965 when the Voting Rights Act was passed...!

To Read or Not to Read! I believe that we all love to read and are aware of the Banned Books Movement currently taking place. So let's observe International Literacy Day on Friday, September 8, 2023 and Banned Books Week during October 1-7, 2023 by reading or rereading a Banned Book!! My top three are:

The Bluest Eye – Toni Morrison To Kill A Mockingbird – Harper Lee Fahrenheit 451 – Ray Bradbury

National Fine Art Appreciation Day – Wednesday, October 25, 2023 Visit a museum, explore an art exhibit, study an artist's work, create your own art! Art transcends cultural boundaries and is a strong binding force that unites people no matter where we come from...

Do not forget **National Hispanic Heritage Month**: Friday, September 15-Sunday, October 15! The 2023 theme is "Latinos: Driving Prosperity, Power and Progress In America"!!

Fundraiser Officer Kathy Zeigenfus kzeigenfus@aol.com

Our Committee has been planning the Annual Scholarship Luncheon and I am happy to say that it will be

an IN PERSON event for the first time since 2019. We know that Lucy Ricardo, Ethel Mertz, and Louise Jefferson would be thrilled to attend our event which



will be held at the Italian Gourmet Restaurant in Galloway on Saturday, November 18. In addition to our scrumptious food, raffle baskets, speakers and cocktails, we are thrilled to present the vocal talents of Gina Roche. Gina comes to us with an added plus. Her daughter, Zoey, attended our first STEM Camp and is currently an astro-physics major at Rutgers University. A brief description of Gina's repertoire is linked here.

We were most appreciative of your extremely generous contributions to scholarships and our STEM programs during the last three years and know that you can count on your support as we return to an in-person event. Think of all



the good we do for young ladies attending college in our area and for those pursuing their interests in predominantly male dominated fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. And think of how the costs of everything have increased so much since Covid.



Our Fundraising Committee is rather small, mighty, but small. We are calling on you to help us to make our Basket Raffle a success by acquiring gift cards from local businesses and restaurants as they are very popular basket gifts. If you can each find one or two places that you frequent, we will include them in attractive baskets for our special event. We have forms to give the proprietors for tax purposes. Or, you may have a hobby or passion that would motivate you to make up a basket yourself. In the past, many members have creatively put together baskets featuring dogs, cats, a

shore resort, books, wine, movies, Italian, Irish, or any ethnic themed ideas. Just let us know at our first meeting in September. Finally, if you have any new items which could be used in baskets, like gourmet

food items, wine, scarves, jewelry, handbags or personal care items, bring them to the meeting or call me for a pick-up. With your help, this could be the best luncheon fundraiser ever. (I'm already excited about putting my tickets in the baskets!)

So, save the date, tell you friends and fellow members, and look forward to our, "Afternoon of Musical Love." We are focusing on enjoyment, entertainment, and fun.



The Boscov's Friends Helping Friends promotion is still going on. This is such an easy way to support AAUW by purchasing \$5.00 coupons which will allow you to shop on October 18 with a 25% discount on all of your purchases. Buy one for yourself and two, five, or even ten for family, friends, postal carriers, hairdressers, manicurists, cleaning personnel, teachers, bus drivers and oh so many others who help you in your everyday lives. Send a check made out to

AAUW to Kathy Zeigenfus at 127 Garnett Lane in Egg Harbor Township 08234. I will send the coupons out ASAP. Thanks for your support.

Public PolicyArlene Grochaggroch@mac.com

What is AAUW National's policy on the right to abortion?

Gloria Blackwell, AAUW COO issued a Press Release after the Dobbs decision: "AAUW believes everyone has the right to make decisions about their own reproductive lives without government interference. Abortion access is vital to women's ability to control their lives, bodies and futures. Without reproductive freedom, there can be no equity." Link here

To achieve that policy AAUW's action alert tool, "Two Minute Activist," urged members take the following actions:

The Women's Health Protection Act (<u>H.R. 12/S. 701</u>) is critically needed to address the ceaseless attacks on reproductive rights. Urge Congress to finally codify the right for patients to access, and health care professionals to provide, abortion care. This bill would protect abortion care as a statutory right and prohibit restrictions — including mandatory waiting periods, arbitrary deadlines like 6- or 20-week bans, biased counseling, two-trip requirements, and mandatory ultrasounds — that are medically unnecessary." Link here

If you are interested in reading my list of some of the real life consequences of Dobbs on the lives of women and young girls, click here.

National urged members to "get Involved" and encouraged both longtime advocates and new supporters to "make their voices heard." This Public Policy essay is my effort to "make (my) voice heard". I'd very much like to hear your voice, so please respond to me by email and let me know if you agree or disagree with anything herein, or just wish to "make your voice heard."



Tech Trek 2023, which was held at Stockton University during the week of July 24th, was an enlightening experience to this first-time attendee. Determination, teamwork, and enthusiasm by the students was felt the minute I entered a session. Those teaching the subjects showed professionalism and love of what they were doing. And our AAUW members were engaged and enjoying spending time with the girls. However, it seems a sense of humor is an asset when you are a chaperone of a group of teenage girls.

When interviewing various students, who came from all over New Jersey, they quickly responded with their motivations for attending. One young lady from Paramus stated, "I have something that will make your story more interesting, I have been a diabetic my whole life and I want to learn science to help other with diabetes." Another young lady complained that teachers often call on the boys more than the girls in STEM classes. The commonality the students most shared was the enjoyment of meeting STEM-oriented girls and working together to solve problems.



LinkedIn for Atlantic County AAUW Chapter. I will be setting up a LinkedIn social media page for our Atlantic County Chapter. It has been suggested that this may attract new and younger members. When researching, it is suggested that each organization has a few administrators for the account. If you are interested in joining me as an administrator, please contact me at pamtyson@herocampaign.org or 609-703-1254.

Items of Special Interest

In Remembrance

Myra Gaynor, AAUW member, passed this summer. AAUW has sent a note of condolences. The following reflection of her impact on our community is submitted by our Diversity Officer, Sharone E. Brown-Jackson.

STRAIGHT, NO CHASER...! Reflection of Myra Gaynor (1934-1923)

"Women belong in all the places where decisions are being made" (Ruth Bader Ginsburg)

Myra Gaynor understood the mission of AAUW – to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy – and believed that she should join this noble organization in keeping with her beliefs and integrity. She participated in numerous organizations and never hesitated to use her business skills acquired from Rider University wherein she completed a Master's Degree in Business Education. Mrs. Gaynor had a long and distinguished career as a Business Education Teacher at Pleasantville High School. Myra was known for keeping it real! Mayor Don Guardian attended a meeting in Atlantic City to introduce himself; when he was leaving, she followed him and said "I need you to do this" as she presented him with a list of projects to work on for her community!!

Mrs. Gaynor was very proud of my appointment as Diversity Officer for AAUW! I was surprised that she knew and she told me that she had read our Newsletter. She defined accountability and commitment in her desire to update her AAUW membership and support me!!

Walt Vreeland, beloved husband of Gail Vreeland passed this summer. Walt was an avid supporter of our organization and a friend to many of us. We extend our deepest condolences to Gail at this difficult time.

Looking for a way to help out teachers?

We are holding a PAPER DRIVE

Bring a ream or two of regular printer paper to our Program meeting on September 13 at 7 pm.

Virginia and Arlene are collecting paper for the teachers in Pleasantville and Atlantic City public school after learning of the need at the recent AC ED Equity Board Meeting. Thank you for your support!

Newsletter Publication Schedule

The Atlantic County AAUW newsletter will be published on the following months:

September - Welcome Back & plans ...

November - Fundraiser & Holiday Lunch

January - Happy New Year ...what's ahead

March - Nominating Committee Recommendations & Notice of Annual Meeting (April) & calendar year statement of income & expenses & recommendations for scholarships

May - Accomplishments, wrap-up information on any of the above & Installation of Officers & summer plans

To ensure that you are getting the most current information of our organization's events and happenings, check our Facebook Private Group Page (you must join this page and be accepted in order to view the posts) and reach out to the Interest Group Leaders by email to make certain you are on their mailing lists for information.

Annual Scholarship Fundraiser Event Preview



Lisa Goodwin, Event Coordinator

Mark your Calendars!!

Our Annual Scholarship
Fundraiser will be in November.

Registration is due: Nov 2, 2023

Register early for your seating preferences -limited seating for this scheduled event

Where

Gourmet Italian Cuisine Pitney Road, Galloway, NJ

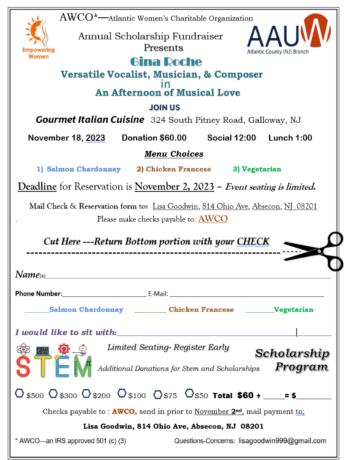
When

November 18, 2023 12:00

What

Our previous recipients of STEM & Scholarship Program and a special guest

Gina Roche





Sample Event Invitation

This year's Event Invitation includes at the bottom a section;

"Additional Donations for Stem and Scholarship Program"

If you are coming to the event **and** would like to make a donation-<u>add the</u> donation amount to the \$60.00.

When you receive the Invitation please mail in EARLY with your payment.

Any questions or concerns regarding the Event, please don't hesitate to ask.

My email is: lisagoodwin999@gmail.com

Cape May AAUW Chapter invites us to join them for September Outing



St. Mary by-the-Sea Retreat House Is now the Cape May Point Science Center

The AAUW CMC September Activity will be a tour of the Cape May Point Science Center 101 Lehigh Ave, Cape May Point, NJ 08212 Meet for the 1:00pm Tour Monday, Sept. 11 Cost: \$10 email: Barbara Heinrichs at bheinrichs46@earthlink.net

St. Mary's By the Sea Retreat House Sale
Cape May Point Science Center

INTEREST GROUPS

Documentary/Short Film Group

Jean Mason

Jeanmariemason54@gmail.com



I am pleased that the AAUW Documentary Film Group will once again occur this year. We will meet on the first Monday of each month at the Linwood Library from 1:00 to 3:30 PM. A lively discussion and snacks will follow the viewing of the films. The first documentary of the year will be: "Won't You be my Neighbor?"- a film about Mister Rogers. PLEASE NOTE: Since the first Monday of September is Labor Day, we will meet at the Linwood Library on Wednesday, September 6 at 1:00 PM. I hope to see you there for a fun time, laughs, discussion and food!

Any questions, comments or cries of outrage, contact me, jeanmariemason54@gmail.com or 610-761-3106.

Explorers Group

Kristina Baker

kristinabaker2014@gmail.com

The Explorer Interest Group has visited some very interesting locations over the summer:

June: Atlantic County Historical Society

July: Birding by Boat, Cape May

August: Cat Rescue in Ocean City (C.A.T.S.)

Front L-R: Joan Vicari, Theresa Sartorio, Aida Colon, Meredith Trede, and Theresa Basquez Back L-R: Bill Fulton, Nash Fulton, Pam Tyson, Tricia Leith, Rena Leith, and Brad Kenyon

Upcoming:

September 8 at 1:30 Sunset Flower Farm



Included in the \$20 charge is a tour of the fields and each member will receive a bouquet of flowers. Cash will be collected before the tour.

Linda Rau the owner, along with her husband grows and sells their flowers to florists, grocery stories etc. Peonies, sunflowers and hydrangeas are a few of the flowers grown. She will explain how to grow the flowers and how to keep them fresh in arrangements. Also, they will cover the pros and challenges in their business.



Restrooms are available and she recommends wearing sneakers and a hat. If it is a hot day, bring a water bottle with you.

Contact me if you would like to carpool or contact another member to arrange. The farm is located about 20 minutes from Exit 25 of the Garden State. The address is: 550 Hands Mill Road Belleplain 08270.

If it is pouring rain, she can give the talk in the barn. For more information: www.sunsetflowerfarm.com

RSVP to me if you plan to attend either by email or 609-602-4467

Future dates are October 13 Cranberry Bog tour, November 10 and December 8. Details will be sent out to members closer to the date. Send me an email to be included in the informational email blast.

The Salon Group

Valerie Koob

vkoob@aol.com

Hope everyone had a terrific summer! The Salon, a discussion group, began our new season in July. We meet monthly to discuss a timely issue or a philosophical question. A facilitator chooses the topic and prepares questions to pose at the meeting. There are no right or wrong answers, and we are not searching for a consensus. The discussion is the point!

A few of our past topics have included: The Pros and Cons of Artificial Intelligence, Recent Supreme Court Decisions, Growing Old in America, Near Death Experiences, and Immigration in the US.

You can find us at the Margate Library, from 2:30-3:30, on the second Monday of each month, from now through March, when our Great Decisions group will resume. Our next meeting is on Monday September 11. Fyi, our October meeting will be held off-site, please email me for the location. If you want to join the Salon group, or just learn more about it, email me at VKoob@aol.com.

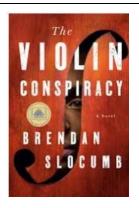
Book Group

Mary Lou Breidenstine

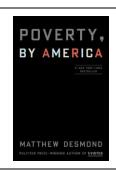
breidensti@aol.com

The AAUW book group will begin its 2023-2024 season on Friday, October 6 with The Violin Conspiracy by Brendan Slocumb. The Ocean City Public Library will host an author talk by Mr. Slocumb and has chosen this book for their community reads program. Joan Vicari will lead our discussion. November's book is A Month in the Country by J.L. Carr and will be led by Diana Intenzo. Karen Cifrese will lead the group on a discussion of Ruth and Barbie by Robin Gerber in December.

All meetings will be on the first Friday of the month at 10:30 at the Linwood Library unless otherwise noted. New people are always welcome. Please send me an email to be added to our list.



For a More Equal Society is a small discussion group that meets via ZOOM on the second Thursday of each month at 1pm. We talk about issues of equity and try to educate ourselves on how to foster a society where civil discourse can lead to more justice and equality for all. Over the summer we have been reading "Poverty, by America" by Matthew Desmond and the closing discussion will be September 14. Anyone is welcome (We have two members from Ocean Co.) Please let Carolyn know if you want to get notices about the group meetings and discussion topics.



Conversational Spanish

Jeannette Flax

jcflax@yahoo.com



This group meets year-round Mondays from 4:00 to 6:00 via Zoom. Our goal is to improve our Spanish listening and speaking skills. There is no homework! We discuss gardening, books, movies, international affairs, our families, and food. Consider joining us, even if you can't come every week. Contact me for more details. Consider joining us!

Ethnic Cuisines

Ann-Maria Guevara Gretchen Braunwrath amguevara@comcast.net gretchenb66@gmail.com

A lovely time was had by all attendees at our recent lunch at Athenian Garden. We gather monthly at local restaurants to try new cuisine and enjoy each other's company. Consider joining us and send an email to be added to the information list.

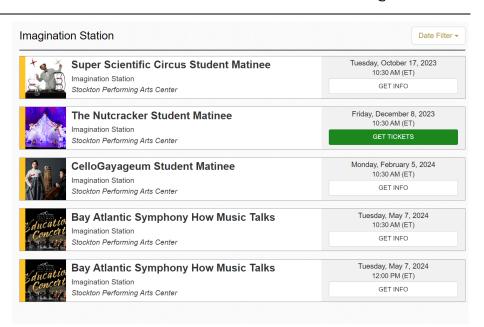
Stockton Theater Ushers Group

Theresa Sartorio

theresasartorio@comcast.net



Stockton Children's Theater
Imagination Station Needs Volunteer
Ushers. If you can volunteer for a
show, please call or email me (Theresa)
at 609 965-9521 or
theresasartorio@comcast.net. I will
contact you with the details. It is an
enjoyable experience and we often
meet for lunch following. Join us!



Our Great Decisions group meets to discuss world affairs once a week for eight weeks in April and May. The program involves reading a chapter in the Great Decisions Briefing Book, then meeting at the Margate Library to watch a short film about the topic. We then discuss the topic. We have discussed some of the most critical global issues facing our country.



I will have more information on specific topics and dates in our January newsletter. Stay tuned!

Travel Group Carolyn Bassett geoca41@gmail.com

The Travel Group meets about once a month on the second Wednesday at 1pm on ZOOM. Members describe an interesting trip they have taken and (usually) give us some background about the area they visited. So far the first three meetings have been scheduled. The first will be a presentation by Theresa Basquez (who gave us the in-depth exploration of Hawaii last year) on GREECE: The Acropolis and an Isle October 11. That will be followed by a program by Mary Ingraham and her husband Phil who investigated the history of the Vikings in Scandinavia. That will take place on November 8 at 1pm. In December, Karen Weis will share details of her trip to a

Acropolis, Athens



little-known part of Italy: Puglia. That will be December 13. I am going to skip the month of February because the second Wednesday is both Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday, but I am looking for volunteers for January 10 and the months following February. The people who have made these presentations have told me that they enjoy re-visiting their experiences and the people who watch always find that they come away with more appreciation of the area explored, and sometimes a desire to visit it themselves. Let Carolyn know if you want to get announcements of up-coming programs, and also if you would like to volunteer to be a presenter.

Programs and Board Meetings			
Sept 13 Wednesday	7 pm Linwood Library	Program Meeting Tutors for Educational Equity	Shelley Cohen
Oct 16 Monday	7 pm Zoom	Board Meeting All are Welcome	Jean McAlister Shelly Meyers
Oct 18 Wednesday	Noon Careme's	Program Meeting and Luncheon How Secondary Education Has Changed Post-COVID (\$20 cost for luncheon)	Shelley Cohen
Nov 2 Thursday		Fundraiser RSVP Due	Lisa Goodwin
Nov 18 Saturday	Noon Italian Gourmet	Fundraiser Luncheon An Afternoon of Musical Love	Kathy Zeigenfus

Information on the dates, times and event details for Interest Groups can be found in the sections above or by contacting the Interest Group Leader directly.