



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

***WELCOME SPRING!***

## **Presidents' Message**

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Dear AAUW Membership:

It is hard to believe our term as co-presidents is ending this May. It has been our honor to serve you, and we have enjoyed our work for two years on behalf of AAUW-Atlantic County. We are grateful to the officers, leaders of the interest groups, and those who assumed administrative positions, which have kept our organization running effectively and efficiently.

Our members ensure that our fundraising efforts are maximized to support scholarships for students, our STEM initiatives, winter, and summer camps at ACCC and Stockton, which are all managed by our finance officer and treasurer. We are a true team.

The work that goes into our newsletter, public relations, scholarship committee, and hospitality, is due to the details that contribute to engaging our members while perpetuating the AAUW mission. A reach out to our members to assist Anne with the newsletter, Theresa with STEM, Pam with public relations, and Lois with scholarships. We need your help!!!!

Thank you to our leaders whose terms have ended, Shelley Cohen, programing vice president, and Linda Karp, treasurer. Your contributions to AAUW in program development, membership, fundraising, and participation in many of the interest groups, has made you an integral and long-lasting part of the AAUW Atlantic County family.

Thanks, too, to the Linwood Public Library for so graciously allowing us to host our meetings at a most comfortable and convenient location.

In closing, if we could make one wish, it would be that more members would step up to leadership positions. Please consider becoming an officer or leader of an interest group when called upon. Your efforts only strengthen us more. We have a strong slate of officers to present at our April 9, 2025, meeting.

Warm regards, Jean McAlister and Shelly Meyers, co-presidents.

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**Mark your Calendar:  
AAUW Board Meeting  
April 21, 2025  
7pm via Zoom**

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## SLATE OF OFFICERS 2025-2027

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AAUW Bylaws require that three members serve on the nominating committee. This year, the committee was Jackie Shelley-Tasoff, chairperson, Jean McAlister, and Shelly Meyers.

Mark your calendar as we will vote on the slate of officers Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 7pm after the April meeting presentation. We will ratify the vote at our May meeting.

The slate of officers is as follows:

Jeanmarie Mason, co-president	2025-2027
Eveyln Caterson, co-president	2025-2027
Jean McAlister, program co-vice president	2025-2027
Shelly Meyers, program co-vice president	2025-2027
Shelly Meyers, membership vice-president	2024-2026
Jackie Shelley-Tasoff, finance officer	2024-2026
Priscilla Gay Laubert, board secretary	2024-2026
Nicola Tasoff, community partnership officer	2024-2026
Lois Fried, scholarship officer	2024-2026
Theresa Basquez, STEM officer	2024-2026
Marcia Shomo, treasurer	2025-2027
Sharone Brown-Jackson, diversity officer	2025-2027
Kathy Zeigenfus, co-fundraising officer	2024-2026
Carol Zerbe, co-fundraising officer	2024-2026
Pam Tyson, public information officer	2024-2026
OPEN Public Policy officer	2025-2027

Responsibilities of the open Public Policy position include keeping the chapter informed of current public policies that affect AAUW and reflect our mission.

Please consider accepting this position for AAUW and reach out to one of the Nominations Committee members.

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### Program Vice President

Shelley Cohen

cohen2475@gmail.com

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To commemorate Black History Month, our branch held a Zoom program on February 19th featuring local writer Turiya A Raheem who discussed her book [Growing Up in the Other Atlantic City: Wash's and the Northside](#). She read a selection from her work, shared her family's story, and related how her novel coincided with the launch of the HBO series, Boardwalk Empire. Since many of our members attended Atlantic City High School as she did, there was a lively discussion about those times. Both last year's in-person February event at the AC Arts Garage highlighting the life of Black entrepreneur Sarah Spencer Washington and this year's program focused on the accomplishments of strong women from our local community who value education and leadership. Thanks to Pam Tyson who created the program flyer and Anne Carson for their assistance in publicizing this program.

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## Note Special Time for March 5th Program

### AAUW March Program: Relax & Regenerate

Join us as award winning poet and Stockton University professor

### Emari DiGiorgio

leads us in an interactive session that will focus on inner calmness and creativity.

**Wednesday, March 5**

**From 4pm-5pm (new time)**

**Linwood Library**

*(back meeting room - bring a pen)*

301 Davis Ave, Linwood, NJ 08221

**Free Event**

*Invite a friend to join!*



March's program will be held on the **first week** of the month, **Wednesday, March 5th from 4 to 5pm at the Linwood Library**. To accommodate our members who prefer not to drive in the dark, we opted to try an earlier time slot. Please note that this session will be held in the **rear meeting room** of the library. Our presenter will be Emari DiGiorgio, a Stockton University professor and author of two award-winning poetry collections. Her presentation, Relax & Regenerate, will focus on inner calmness and creativity. So, bring a pen and treat yourself to an enjoyable interactive event.

Since Earth Day falls in April, Jean has asked the President of the Atlantic County Utilities Authority, Matthew DeNato, to present on the pertinent topic of microplastics and other environmental issues in our county. This program will be held at the Linwood Library on **Wednesday April 9th at 7pm**.

Our final program of this season will take place on **Saturday, May 3rd in Cape May, New Jersey**. We will meet at the new Cape May Point Science Center to learn about their activities followed by a presentation from the director of Project Monarch who will discuss the tracking of the butterfly migration.

We then will convene together at a local venue, TBA, for lunch where the installation of new officers will take place. Carpools will be available. Our committee is now working on the details so more information will be given in upcoming flyers. Our last jaunt to Cape May was a few years ago. Our members really enjoyed that event and we hope you will all join us for this upcoming one. This will cap off my tenure as Programming VP. I want to thank our co-presidents & all our committee members. They are creative idea generators and work hard to make our programs successful. Please consider joining either this committee or others that work to ensure our branch stays viable.

Membership is a crucial part of AAUW's mission. Thanks to our fundraising and program committees, we have coordinated events that attract new members and help retain our current members. Please consider bringing a potential member to our programs or interest group gatherings so they can see for themselves who we are and what we offer.

I received a list of membership expirations from our chapter and reached out to you by email. I understand that some of you may have rejoined, and the notification of your membership status has been delayed.

I received a notice from National for dues payments and rather than sending them renewal, I sent my check directly to our treasurer. In the past, I paid National directly and was included on the membership expiration list. Please check your email for my message, and respond to my message, so that I can update the membership records.

I look forward to seeing you at our March 5<sup>th</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup> program meetings.

Warmest regards, Shelly Meyers

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**Finance Officer**

Jacalyn Shelley-Tasoff

jacalyn\_shelley2003@yahoo.com

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**Treasurer's Report:** Linda Karp reported the current balance in our OceanFirst checking account is \$6,527.57 as of January 22, 2025.

**Finance Officer's Report:**

Jackie Shelley-Tasoff reviewed the attached AAUW-AC Income & Expense Report (see button on cover email) as of December 31, 2024. Overall, we're "on budget" for income and expenses for the first half of the year. However, we are projecting a \$1,463 deficit between income received and expenses for the year ending June 30, 2025.

The fundraising results for this past November were outstanding. \$2,612 was raised for STEM and is deposited with AWCO to pay for Tech Trek expenses. The current balance in AWCO's STEM account is \$20,980 that includes a bequest made by Stella Hordes of \$5,000.

The balance of our Scholarship Account with AWCO is currently \$22,262. A total of \$3,089 was raised during our November fundraiser. In addition, \$8,600 was donated in memory of Carolyn Bassett and \$5,000 was bequeathed by Stella Hordes. \$250 is designated for Salem CCC and \$2,000 will be maintained in the AWCO-AAUW-AC account for future deposits on events.

\$8,600 was approved for a scholarship to a Stockton student majoring in education as designated by Carolyn's family.

\$3,000 for a scholarship to an Atlantic Cape CC student.

In addition, the Board approved the following transfers from our account held by AWCO to our Community Foundation of South Jersey account:

- \$6,412 of prior year undesignated scholarship funds and \$250 designated Salem CC funds for a total of \$6,662.
- Stella's \$5,000 bequest as designated by her son.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

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**Upcoming Project: Dress for Success Professional Attire Clothing Drive**

Mark your calendars! Our Dress for Success Professional Attire Clothing Drive will take place from March 30 – April 13, 2025. Clothes can be dropped off between the hours of 9 AM – 4 PM seven days a week at Joe Canal's Black Horse Pike EHT near Lowe's. Additionally, if you plan to attend the April 9<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Linwood Library, I will be prepared to take your donations then, as well.

We are focusing on quality over quantity, so please reference the flyer when selecting items to donate. Donations should be dropped off in bags not boxes so that they are easier to handle. If you have any questions or would like to donate early, please text Nicola at 609-226-5547 to make arrangements.

Looking for inspiration? Join me for a day of shopping and have fun putting together an outfit at: Goodwill Store & Donation Center (Black Horse Pike, EHT) – April 5, 10 AM – 12 PM

Once our Dress for Success Professional Attire Clothing Drive wraps up on April 13, I will need two or three volunteers to help sort the donated items and prepare them for distribution to Atlantic Cape's Campus Closet in Mays Landing. If you're available to lend a hand, please let me know—I'd truly appreciate the help.

**Upcoming Project: #GreatBigPeriodProductDrive – Supporting Women Fighting Hunger**

We are proud to support the Community Food Bank of New Jersey in their mission to help women in need by collecting essential period products.

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**Scholarship Officer**

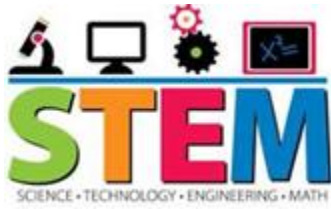
Lois Fried

loissfried@gmail.com

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Ladies, this year our branch's efforts to raise money for scholarships has been successful beyond our expectations. Through our fundraising efforts, we will be providing a scholarship of \$3,000 to a student (female, if possible) at Atlantic Cape Community College who is in the nursing program. Through the generosity of the family and friends of Carolyn Bassett, a scholarship of \$8,600 will be awarded to a student majoring in education at Richard Stockton University. Our dear friend Stella Hordes left a bequest of \$5,000 which our board voted to add to the endowment held at the Community Foundation of South Jersey to fund scholarships for years to come. We thank everyone who worked so hard to ease the financial burden of our scholarship recipients this year.

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**TECH TREK 2025 – July 20-26.** We will be scheduling and conducting interviews of the Atlantic County Tech Trek nominees between **March 3rd and April 5th.** Two volunteers are needed for each interview, so please let me know if you would like to participate. Interviews can be scheduled in a public facility (e.g., school, library) or via Zoom. For each student that you interview, you will receive her nomination and application, as well Tech Trek background/planning information, interview script and rubric.

Speaking of Tech Trek, please volunteer in whatever capacity you can. There are several opportunities for service. The volunteer form at the link below allows you to choose how, when and what times you are available to support camp activities:

<https://techtrek-nj.aauw.net/volunteer/>

At **TWEEN TECH**, held at Stockton University on Friday, January 3, 2025, I was able to chaperone the CSI investigation workshop, where the girls were presented with the basics of protecting, measuring, and photographing a crime scene, and then presented with a crime scene for processing, and completed with a background story. Everyone was involved in a hands-on task, so it was not only instructive, but great fun as well!

Other workshops included Coding Your Sphero Robot, Building a Wind Turbine, Fishing Workshop, From Sap to Syrup, Egg Drop Challenge, Set Sail with Buoyancy, Density, & Gravity, Lissajous Laser Figures and Bird Species Identification.



Thanks to volunteers Kris Baker, Theresa Basquez, Holly Cyrus, Terry Dailey, Jeannette Flax, Kathy Ghanavati, and Gay Laubert, who were very necessary to escort the 150 middle-school students throughout the day of STEM workshops. Volunteers were in short supply for various reasons - please try to support STEM activities because they open doors to a future many girls may not have imagined.

Thank you for your support.

Happy National AAUW Day!

Diversity – Equity – Inclusive

I attended our excellent Black History Program (2/19/2025) featuring Turiya Raheem, author of the book – *Growing Up In the The Other Atlantic City*; it was timely and reflected the 2025 theme for National Black History Month – African Americans and Labor.

I also attended an AAUW Diversity webinar event via Zoom titled *Table Talks: Tips for Bold Conversations* (1/29/2025). It was engaging and thought-provoking!

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What is Tuesday, March 25, 2025? It is AAUW National Day and also Equal Pay Day!!

And in light of National Women's History Month 2025, the theme is "*Moving Forward Together: Women Educating & Inspiring Generations*"; lest we not forget the founders of AAUW in 1881 – Marion Talbot and Ellen Swallow Richards. I also want to point out Mary Church Terrell, the first Black member of AAUW in 1948 after she won an anti-discrimination lawsuit.

The month of April is Celebrate Diversity Month and our excellent website – [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org) – has many ideas on how to celebrate thru the AAUW Inclusion and Equity Committee / Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Toolkit.

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## Fundraiser Officer

Kathy Zeigenfus

kzeigenfus@aol.com

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The Fundraising Committee will be doing the Boscov's Friends Helping Friends Program again this year. We will be sending out a notice as soon as we receive the coupons in the summer. We know that many organizations participate in this program so we will be right on top of it. Remember these \$5.00 coupons make lovely gifts for family and friends.

Our first meeting of the year is so important for renewing our friendships, learning about our plans for the year and getting to know new members. We're going to make it more fun than ever by doing a Trivia Game Fundraiser for Scholarships and STEM Programs, as well. So keep your brains sharp and look forward to our 2025-2026 new AAUW year with a fun and worthwhile event!!!

Kathy Zeigenfus and Carol Zerbe

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## Public Policy

Jean McAlister

mcaliste@atlanticcape.edu

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Education Advocacy/New DEI Policy Changes

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Education Department (ED) sent a "Dear Colleague" letter to universities and colleges on February 14 to clarify and reaffirm their nondiscrimination obligations. The bottom line is that if colleges and universities are non-compliant, they risk losing Federal funding. If you would like to read the letter it is linked [here](#).

Gloria Blackwell, CEO (AAUW) stated in her recent letter: **Taking Action to Safeguard Education**, "AAUW remains unwavering in our commitment to education and equity.

The first months of 2025 have been chaotic to say the least. People around the country, especially here in Washington, D.C., are deeply feeling the impact of the current administration's Executive Orders. I hope you are taking care of yourself.

AAUW is standing strong. We will continue to advocate fiercely and stand firm against any threats to educational opportunities despite the uncertainty we're all feeling right now.

There are many issues that may need to be addressed moving forward, but now and in the future, AAUW is focused on safeguarding higher education. We strongly oppose the likely confirmation of Linda McMahon for U.S. Secretary of Education, whose leadership would endanger vital civil rights protections for students. [Read our statement here for more details about how we are moving forward.](#)"



## INTEREST GROUPS

### Documentary/Short Film Group

Jean Mason

Jeanmariemason54@gmail.com



**Monday, March 3, 2025- 1:00- Lead Me Home-** "500,000 Americans experience homelessness every night. Lead Me Home is a documentary short by Jon Shenk and Pedro Kos that captures the experience from multiple perspectives. This immersive, cinematic film personalizes the overwhelming issue by telling the real-life stories of those going through it as a first step toward challenging uninformed attitudes and outmoded policies and gives the audience a rare, in-depth look at the scale, scope and diversity of unsheltered America today." Although this film depicts the West Coast issue, right here in Atlantic and Cape May Counties, we are faced with many people who are homeless. **Watch the trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moekzAxXe0o>

**Monday, April 7, 2025- 1:00 -The Mind Explained, How to Focus-** "Emma Stone narrates this illuminating adventure through the human brain — exploring the science behind memory, dreams, anxiety, mindfulness, and more." **Watch the trailer:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SzZTTHbj-8>

I hope to see you at the AAUW Film Group on the first Monday of the month at 1:00 at the Linwood Library. Come join us for a stimulating conversation while we chat and chew!

### Bon Appetit

Kristina Baker

kristinabaker2014@gmail.com

"Bon appetit!" meets monthly on the 3rd Monday at 1 PM to explore cuisine and cooking techniques in our homes. Each meeting takes place at a different member's home where they or a guest presenter will prepare a dish for us to sample.

In January, Shelly Meyers explained the history of bagels and we had an opportunity to taste some from her favorite local bagel shop. She matched the bagels with some traditional Jewish sides for the bagels.

February brought us to our guest vegan chef's house, Pat Peiffer where she made Lemony Chickpea Soup with dill and had some homemade bread. Special thank you goes to both ladies for we were able to taste new dishes and learn some cooking techniques.

Our group will not be meeting in March and April due to AAUW Atlantic County Chapter Great Decisions class.

**Save the Date:**

**Monday May 19**

**Christine will be making a French family recipe**

If you have a question about our group, I can be reached at 609-602-4467







In January the group visited the Risley Homestead in Northfield. Since the home is small John Risley gave us two separate tours that afternoon. This home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

February 14 visit to Barefoot Bakery in Ocean City was cancelled due to the owner being sick. This tour will be rescheduled as noted below. Due to this, the Explorer Group was able to visit Stockton University's Art Gallery on Friday February 21. We were given a tour and talk by Stockton Professor Tom Papademetriou on Byzantine church architecture and iconography. Special thank you goes to Tula Christopoulos for her help in organizing this event.

### **Upcoming: Save the Date**

#### **Friday March 14**

Time: 1:30

Program: American Vegan Society

Location: Newfield Library (45 minute ride from Linwood Library, located just off Route 40 )

Freya Dinshah, Editor of American Vegan will explain the history of the vegan movement, the vegan diet ( including how to include protein and calcium) and the vegan lifestyle. She will also have literature available for us to take home to read and share. This event is open to friends and relatives since we will be meeting in the library conference room which I understand holds a number of people.

RSVP to me if you plan to attend, and "Reply to All" if you want to carpool or need a ride.

#### **Thursday April 3**

Time: 1:00pm

Program: Historical Tour with the CMC Branch

Location: The Southern Mansion Hotel, 720 Washington Street, Cape May

The cost of the tour is \$10 to pay the guide and contribute to historical preservation. Please email Joan Vicari at [jbvicari@yahoo.com](mailto:jbvicari@yahoo.com) by Wednesday, March 20 to register to take this tour. Friends and family members are welcome to join us. If anyone is interested in getting together for brunch before the tour, we will meet at George's in the Acme Shopping center at 11:30am. We will order off the menu (breakfast and lunch available).

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Please also be sure to let Joan Vicari know if you plan to come to lunch. You may join us for lunch only, the tour only, or both.

**Friday April 11**

Time: 2:00pm

Program: Bakery Life

Location: Barefoot Market, 214 West Ave., Ocean City, NJ

Rescheduled from February.

If you have a question or concern, I can be reached at 609-602-4467 or send me an email.

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**The Salon Group**

Valerie Koob

vkoob@aol.com

Happy New Year! The Salon sends our best wishes to all for a healthy a joyous 2025. We have two more meetings before we take a break for the Great Decisions group, and then we will resume meeting in late spring.

The Salon group meets monthly to discuss a timely issue or a philosophical question. Each month, a member volunteers to facilitate; they choose a topic and prepare 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!

Over the past two years, we have hit on a wide range of topics, including: the Health Insurance Industry, An Election Recap, Mental Illness Myths and Facts, A Sampling of Voter Issues, Controversial Works of Art, Obesity and New Weight Loss Drugs, How to Find Happiness, Trends in US Education, Homelessness, Banned Books, Religion in Society, Trans Girls in Sports, The Pros and Cons of Artificial Intelligence, Ethics and Euthanasia, Growing Old in America, and more.

We meet from 2:30-3:30, on the second Monday of each month, usually at the Margate Library, though if the library is closed, we meet at a member's home. If you want to join the Salon group, or just learn more about it, please email me at VKoob@aol.com.

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**Great Decisions Group**

Lynne Walters

rrwalters321@hotmail.com



Our Great Decisions interest group will be meeting each week from March through May to discuss various issues involving the U. S. and its relationship with many other countries. We will read a chapter in the Great Decisions book, meet to watch a master class on the topic and then discuss our thoughts on these global issues. If you have any questions, please contact me via email.

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**Book Group**

Mary Lou Breidenstine

breidensti@aol.com

The March 7 Book Club meeting at the Linwood Library begins at 10:30. Shelley Cohen will lead the discussion of Orbital by Samatha Harvey. We will have a chance to discuss the many things going on in the mind of astronauts as they circle the globe.

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The April 4 meeting focuses on So Big by Edna Ferber. Karen Cifrese is our presenter. I have chosen The Weight of Water by Anita Shreve as our book for May. This book is about a murder that took place off the coast of Maine over 100 years ago and is still disputed. I think you will enjoy it. I did.

If you would like to receive reminders of meeting dates, email me at breidensti@aol.com. New people are always welcome.

Date	Title	Author	Reviewer
3/7/25	Orbital	Samantha Harvery	Shelley Cohen
4/4/25	So Big	Edna Ferber	Karen Cifrese
5/2/25	The Weight of Water	Anita Shreve	Mary Lou Breidenstine
6/6/25	The Greenlanders	Jane Smiley	Dot Allison

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### **The Equal Justice Group**

Ann-Maria Guevara

amguevara@comcast.net

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The Equal Justice group meets monthly, the second Thursday of the month, via Zoom, to discuss issues of social justice and the current deeply troubling political situation. We welcome new members. Please email me for more information if you are interested in joining.

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### **Conversational Spanish**

Jeannette Flax

jcflax@yahoo.com



Every Monday afternoon our conversation group gathers in the meeting room of the Linwood Library from 4:15 to 6:00 to practice and to improve our fluency as we discuss our jobs, families, and activities. We encourage one another - all in Spanish, of course. Why not join us? Remember, there is NO homework!.

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### **Ethnic Cuisines**

Gretchen Braunwrath

gretchenb66@gmail.com

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Our members are very interested in international cuisine. From September through May, this luncheon group meets at local ethnic restaurants to socialize and enjoy good food and good times together. Please send me an email if you are interested in joining us.

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Stockton Ushers are enjoying lunch together after the October 23<sup>rd</sup> event. Volunteers are needed as ushers for the Stockton Children's Theater. This is an enjoyable way to meet members and help our community.

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Volunteers are needed as ushers for the Stockton Children's Theater. The next two programs are: The Heron's Journey on Wednesday, March 5 at 10:30 and on Tuesday, May 5th the Bay Atlantic Symphony: How Music Talks at 10:30 and 12 pm.

The responsibilities are simple, we work together to get the students seated and make sure the students enjoy the show. After the show, we all go out to lunch and enjoy each others company.

If you would like to volunteer between the hours of 9:45 till 12 noon, please call or email Theresa at 609 965-9521 or [theresasartorio@comcast.net](mailto:theresasartorio@comcast.net).

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**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.**