

Promoting Women's Equity Through Education For Over 100 Years

AAUW BRANCH MISSION: To advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

Presidents' Message

Greetings to AAUW Atlantic County Members,

We are pleased to be a part of an organization in which we are able to empower women and girls. We have enjoyed a wonderful Fall calendar of events, meetings and fundraising. We cannot do it without everyone's support, time and investment in our future women and girls. Thank you to everyone who makes this Branch so collaborative and inviting to current and new members.

Our Fall and Winter involved Community Partnerships for our huge diaper drive, a fantastic Fundraiser- High Tea, Informative Program on Sex Trafficking followed by a lovely Holiday luncheon to end the year. We enjoyed a variety of our Interest Groups. I understand that we are in need of a leader for the Bon Appetit Interest group. Please let me or Lynn Caterson know if anyone is willing to serve as the leader.

Upcoming Programs in 2026 include Educational Inequity, Women in Art and Earth Day. A summary is included in this Newsletter from Shelly Myers and Jean McAlister. More updated information will be sent as we get closer to each Program.

As we enter a New Year, we wish you peace, harmony, good health and continued and possible new participation in our wonderful branch. We would love to have someone step forward to be our Digital Editor once Anne Carson completes her time in this role in May.

With dedication and support,

Co-President- Jeanmarie Mason

Co-President- Lynn Caterson



Officers' Reports:

Program Officers

Jean McAlister

McAliste@atlanticcape.edu

Shelly Meyers

SFMECLLC@gmail.com

Greetings and Happy New Year from Jean McAlister and Shelly Meyers, co-chairs of the AAUW program committee. We want to take this opportunity to thank Kathy Ziegenfus, Carol Zerbe, and their wonderful committee, whose efforts culminated in a beautiful fundraising tea event held at the Flanders in Ocean City.

We had so many in attendance, both members and guests, and our speaker, Victoria Biron, presented her experiences with "Tea Time Traditions."

Also, our holiday luncheon on December 13 was an ideal opportunity for members to socialize in the holiday spirit with nearly 30 in attendance—many thanks to everyone who brought food, desserts, and beverages. We could not have done it without each of you. We are truly blessed to have such wonderful members. Thank you to everyone who brought spices and oil for the Women Fighting Hunger initiative from the Community Foodbank of South Jersey. It was



wonderful to hear Kathy Corbalis speak on the challenges of food insecurity on behalf of Women Fighting Hunger. And of course, Lynn Caterson and the holiday trivia activity was really fun.

Looking ahead to the winter months, there is no member's meeting scheduled in January; however, please put the February and March meeting dates on your calendar.

- On February 24, 2026, via ZOOM at 7:00 pm. There will be a program on Educational Equity, presented by Dr. Claudine Keenen, Professor and Special Assistant to the Provost, Stockton University. She will discuss the State's data on educational equity. A presentation not to miss.
- March 24, 2026, at the Linwood Library, 7 pm, we are currently actively working on a program on Women in Art—more information to follow.
- April 2026-We are actively working on a program with Stockton University in honor of Earth Day—more information to follow.



We are excited to share more program updates with you in the new year.

Membership Officer

Shelly Meyers

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It is with pleasure that I welcome two new members to our AAUW branch, Shirley Dautrich and Quiana Lewis. Shirley was a member of AAUW in Pennsylvania, was very active and assumed leadership roles in their cooking and several education related interest groups. Quiana was one of our success stories as a teacher who participated in the tutoring initiative coordinated by Virginia Rettig. She is currently a second grade teacher at North Main Street school and as a lifelong resident of Pleasantville, she is giving back to her community. We welcome both women and know they will add to the vibrancy of our branch.

This month, I attended an AAUW virtual meeting for membership recruitment. A common goal of each chapter is to increase membership of young people while retaining our veteran members. Much of the discussion during the webinar focused on programming and fundraising to attract multi-aged members, and several of the suggested initiatives are not new to us.

Some ideas were as follows:

1. Partnerships with area colleges and universities, offering free membership to students for the first year. Recruiting students that are offered AAUW scholarships and enlisting them in developing programs that are relevant to them.
 - a. Inviting them to all events with presentations on financial literacy, job coaching, gender equity, career development, etc.
2. Trivia nights and Bingo events that appeal to all ages.
3. Holding a special membership drive that emphasizes "Shape the Future" and includes Women's Empowerment and a Woman of Distinction. (Some branches honor a woman who is not a member of their branch but has made significant contributions to the community.)
4. Social Justice and Equity in Education Programs.
5. A social media presence and face to face communication at colleges/universities at Student Activity Fairs.
 - a. Branch representatives speak with students about women's empowerment and the AAUW platform. We would have them sign up and indicate their interests, then follow up with invitations to events that reflect what they want to learn about.
 - b. Have giveaways at the table with brochures about AAUW.

All these ideas are worth pursuing but for our branch to grow, we need members that are committed to helping make these possible.

If you are interested in helping me to increase our membership while retaining current members, please reach out to me. sfmecllc@gmail.com

Thank you and until next time

Shelly Meyers

Fundraising Officers

Kathy Zeigenfus

kzeigenfus@aol.com

Carol Zerbe

czpaints45@gmail.com



Our big fundraising effort of the year, held on November 15th, was a lovely event and judging by the many responses, thoroughly enjoyed by all who joined us. We had approximately 80 attendees who enjoyed the “High Tea” experience and learned more about the British Tea from our guest speaker Victoria Biron who has traveled many times to London and visited quite a few tea houses. Our baskets and special items were many and quite attractive. There was a lot of bidding going on for items and baskets. An added part to our event was the judging of original or whimsical hat designs created by attendees. This gave us a fun activity and our guest speaker made the winning selection of a shocking pink feathered hat with matching accessories. The Flanders staff was outstanding and the food was presented beautifully and very tasty. It was quite an enjoyable event.

As the date of this writing, our committee has not been informed of the monetary profit. Hopefully we’ll be able to share this information in our next newsletter.

Submitted by Carol Zerbe, committee co-chair

From: Kathy Corbalis <kathycorbalis@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 24, 2025 at 6:45 PM
Subject: Thank You for Making the 2025 #GreatBigDiaperDrive a Huge Success!
To: Nicola Tasoff <nicolatasoff@gmail.com>



Dear AAUW Members:

On behalf of the **Women Fighting Hunger South Jersey** and the **Community FoodBank of New Jersey**, thank you for your incredible support of the **2025 #GreatBigDiaperDrive**. Thanks to your generosity and leadership, this year's campaign was a **tremendous success!**

Your drive contributed to a chapter-wide total of **over 1,900 pounds of diapers and related products—a 160% increase** over last year's results! Together, we also raised **\$1,900 in cash donations**, which will allow the FoodBank to purchase **11,400 additional diapers** for local families in need.

Because of your efforts, more babies in our community will stay **clean, dry, and healthy**, and more parents will be able to work, attend school, and care for their families with dignity and peace of mind.

We are deeply grateful for your partnership and commitment to helping reduce diaper need across South Jersey. Your participation made a direct and meaningful difference for families who need it most.

Thank you again for being part of this year's #GreatBigDiaperDrive and for standing with Women Fighting Hunger in our mission to support local families. We hope you'll join us again next year as we continue to grow this important effort!

With heartfelt appreciation,

Women Fighting Hunger South Jersey
Community FoodBank of New Jersey

Julia Zauner and Terry Budd, #GBDD co-chairs



A Quick Reminder: Please continue saving and collecting sneakers for our spring drive supporting **Sneakers4Good**. **Did you know...** 300 MILLION pairs of shoes are thrown away each year by Americans, discarded shoes and sneakers can take up to 30-40 years to decompose, and every 100 pairs recycled helps save around 3,000 lbs of carbon dioxide emissions. Let's help make a difference!

STEM Officer

Theresa Basquez

tbasquez_86@hotmail.com

Over ten AAUW Atlantic County volunteers will be supporting Tween Tech at Stockton University on **Friday, January 9, 2026**. Many thanks to those of you who volunteered for this one-day program of STEM workshops for 6th-8th Grade girls. There's still time if you'd like to join us (just send me an email)! We are looking forward to a busy, interesting day.

Looking ahead, Atlantic Cape Community College, Mays Landing, will be hosting Teen Tech on Friday, May 8, 2026. This event hosts high school girls for a one-day program of STEM workshops. We'll be looking for volunteers for that event.



And, from July 26-August 1, Stockton University will be hosting Tech Trek, AAUW's one-week STEM camp for rising 8th Grade girls. Fund raising is always in progress to enable about 45 girls to attend, so please keep Tech Trek in mind when planning your giving.

Diversity Officer

Sharone Brown-Jackson

brownjacksonse@aol.com

Looking Back...2025

I loved having Tea @ the Flanders on Saturday, November 15, 2025 with my Sister and my AAUW Sisters! Listening to Vicki Biron talk about her unique tea experiences was a dual pleasure since I had attended high school with Ms. Biron (and her sister attended high school with my brother)!!



I also want to thank Virginia Rettig for her work with the Educational Equity program as I have the current pleasure of working with Dr. Quiana Lewis-Gibbs at North Main Street School in Pleasantville who benefited from this project. A special thank you to Nicola Tasoff and Kathy Corbalis for baby-related necessities that were donated to the Community Food Bank that has assisted many parents in Pleasantville and surrounding communities.

Looking Forward...2026

Happy New Year!

Keep in mind:

January 1 – 163rd Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation

January 4 – World Braille Day

January 11 – National Human Trafficking Day

January 23 – National Hugging Day

And of course ~

“We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now” (Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.)

I will be participating in a Read Across MLK Day virtual program on Monday, January 19, 2026 wherein children’s books about Dr. King are read aloud and shared with educators, parents and students to commemorate Dr. King and his valuable contributions to our society – “My Daddy: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr (Martin Luther King III)

Kung Hei Fat Choi!

February 17 – Happy Chinese New Year – it’s the year of the Fire Horse (energy, freedom, passion)!!

Keep in Mind:

Black History Month starts on Sunday, February 1, 2026; theme: A History of Black History Commemorations – 100th Anniversary...

February 4 – Rosa Parks Day

“I would like to be known as a person who is concerned about freedom and equality and justice and prosperity for all people”

February 6 – National Wear Red Day; don’t forget to attend the AtlantiCare Red Dress/Red Tie event to support heart health!

February 14 – Valentine’s Day

February 15 – Susan B. Anthony Birthday

“The true republic: men, their rights and nothing more: women, their rights and nothing less.”

February 15 – African American Tea Ceremony...

Respectfully submitted, Sharone



According to the AAUW website-

AAUW is investing in strong public education systems that provide equitable, high-quality K-12 education.


"AAUW opposes the use of public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary education and charter schools that do not adhere to the same civil rights and accountability standards required in public schools".

AAUW is working to close the learning and opportunity gaps that disproportionately affect students from low-income and underserved groups.

We will have an opportunity to hear more about education equity on February 24, 2026, at 7 pm via Zoom with Dr. Claudine Keenan, Professor at Stockton University and a member of the NJ State Board of Education.

To find out more about AAUW Public Policy Priorities, please visit the AAUW website.

Matters of Interest

Volunteers Needed	Board Meeting Scheduled
<p>Digital Editor needed for our chapter! This position can be shared by two or more members. Contact Anne Carson for more details. carsonet@gmail.com</p> <p>Group Leader: Bon Appetit. What it involves is: sending our emails about the meetings once a month and a short entry for the Newsletter which is 5 times a year. Contact Kris Baker for more information.</p>	<p>Mark your Calendar:</p> <p>The next Board meeting will be held on Zoom on Monday January 12, 2026 at 6:30 pm. Look for the agenda and Zoom link in your email. All members are welcome to attend!</p> 

Interest Groups:

Short Films & Documentaries

Jeanmarie Mason

jeanmariemason54@gmail.com



Welcome to a New Year of relaxing and enjoyable short films and documentaries. We will meet on the First Monday of the Month at 1:00 at the Linwood Library.

January 5- "Stranger at the Gate" 2022 Oscar Nominated Short (29 minutes)

"A former Marine with P.T.S.D. planned to attack Muslims in Indiana—until an unexpected encounter with faith. Josh Seftel's documentary "Stranger at the Gate" tells the story.

During the turbulent times that we face as a country, let us remember that there is still good in the world. Trailer- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhoZtObnfNk>

February 2- "A Million Eyes"- Award winning Tribeca 2019 short film- 25 minutes): "A short drama about a young, gifted photographer grappling with his mother's alcoholism. The film stars Joe Morton, Katie Lowes, and Elijah M. Cooper, and explores themes of finding hope and art as an outlet. The young photographer sets out to capture something he loves with the help of a mentor." This is an award-winning Tribeca short film.

Trailer- <https://richardraymondfilms.com/video/a-million-eyes-2021-trailer>

Come join us for a "chat and chew" discussion after each film. Invite your friends.

Explorers Club

Kris Baker

kristinabaker2014@gmail.com

The Explorer Interest Group meets on the second Friday of each month at 1 PM where we visit local museums, attractions and businesses. November brought us to Atlantic City for an explanation on the history of Atlantic City and the challenges in running a family bookstore business. The owner of Princeton Antique Book Store shared some very interesting facts, pictures and stories. In December, we visited Gateway Playhouse in Somers Point.

Date: Friday January 9

Program: Tween Tech at Stockton is a one-day program on STEM workshops for 6th- 8th grade girls.

Registration: Contact our STEM Officer, Theresa Basquez at tbasquez_86@hotmail.com or 609-350-2729

There is a conflict with the Explorer date in January and May. Both months the Explorer Interest Group will not meet but I encourage you to EXPLORE and learn about our Atlantic County Chapter's support for Tween Tech at Stockton (January 9) and Teen Tech at Atlantic Cape Community College in Mays Landing (May 8). I encourage you to volunteer for the program. It is very interesting with professors from the college giving lessons on various careers in the STEM

field. The mission of AAUW is "promoting equity and education for women and girls and empowering them to reach their highest potential" Our Chapter has hosted and supported this effort for many years.

February 13 - plans are not finalized

March 13 - Sacred Windows

If you have a question or concern, I can also be reached at 609-602-4467.



Bon Appetit

Kris Baker

kristinabaker2014@gmail.com

This interest group meets on the third Monday of each month at 1 PM at a member's house where she prepares a favorite dish. The group started in February 2024. In November, Christine Gaudry explained the history of the special cake - Tarta de Santiago, and it was very tasty. December, brought us to Sheryl Coleman's kitchen where we enjoyed her family's recipe for latkes. Due to our members' situations such as health issues, travel plans and family obligations no one in the group can take over the role of leader. ***Therefore, this interest group will not continue in the new year.***

The Salon Discussion Group

Shirley Belitsky

Shir1son@msn.com

The Salon is a group of women who like to discuss – almost anything! So that is what we do. We started as Great Discussions, which is a pre-programmed class discussing topics from a book of current events. That goes for several months in the spring each year. When that program was over, we didn't want to disband for another half year, so we created "Salon." The name was chosen to reflect the French salons of the 18th century where educated people with points of view came together to talk and share ideas about science, politics, literature and art.

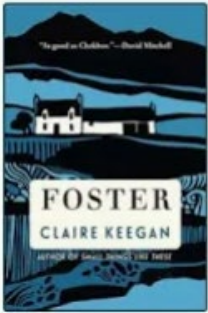
Our topics are chosen by the person presenting, or from suggestions of interest from the group. Sometimes there is an article to read or research to be done, sometimes not. Anything that will create a good discussion is a topic to be considered. We have gone from humor to music to organized crimes as examples.

All of you are welcome to join us. We meet monthly, on the second Monday at 2:30 in the afternoon at the Margate Library. Send me an email if you are interested in joining us!

Book Club

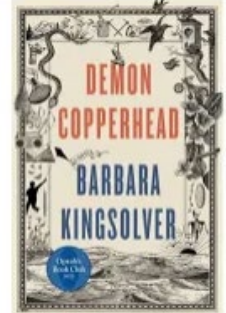
MaryLou Breidenstine

breidensti@aol.com



The AAUW Book Group will resume meeting on February 6 with a discussion of Foster by Claire Keegan. Facilitator will be Ann-Maria Gueverra. We will continue to meet at the Linwood Library at 10:30.

Looking forward to March 6, our selection is Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver. Jackie Shelley will lead. New people are always welcome.

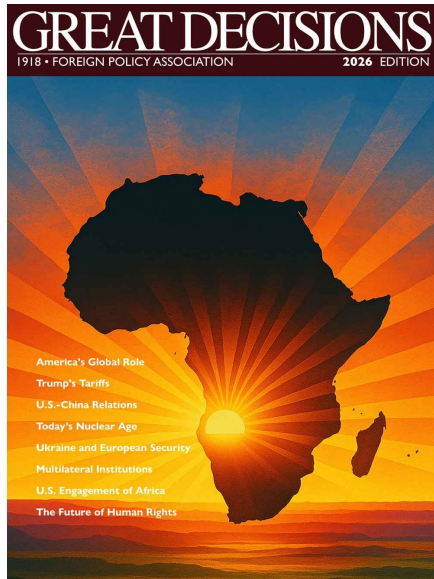


International Studies

Lynne Walters

rrwalters321@hotmail.com

Great Decisions Discussion Group: **REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN. SPACE IS LIMITED.**



Our Great Decisions Discussion Group is part of America's largest discussion group on world affairs. The participants prepare for each session by reading a chapter in the great decisions briefing book. We meet together weekly for eight weeks to view a Master Class on the subject, and then have a discussion about the most critical issues facing America and the world today.

This year we will learn about and discuss America and the World, Trump's 2.0 Foreign Policy; Trump's Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy; US – China Relations; Ruptured Alliances and the Risk Of Nuclear Proliferation; Ukraine, and the Future of European Security; Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order; US Engagement of

Africa; the Future Of Human Rights and International Law.

We will meet at the Margate library on March 16, 23; April 6, 13, 20; May 4, 11, 18. The cost of the briefing book is \$35. We appreciate the Margate Library for providing the space and covering additional program costs. Please email Lynne Walters to reserve a place in the group. You will be contacted with information about picking up and paying for your book prior to the first meeting. They are not available currently.

Stockton Theater

Theresa Sartorio

theresasartorio@comcast.net



Volunteers are needed as ushers for the Stockton Children's Theater. The next two programs are:

1. Our Revolution by Living Voices on Tuesday, February 10th at 10:30.
2. Hear My Voice by Living Voices on Tuesday, March 10 at 10:30.



The responsibilities are simple; we work together to make sure the students enjoy the show. After the show, we relax over lunch and each other's company. So, if you can volunteer, please email or call Theresa at 609 965-9521.

Spanish Group

Jeannette Flax

jcflax@yahoo.com

Have you thought about joining a weekly conversation - in Spanish - to maintain or gain fluency without stress or exams? If so, contact me (609) 653-6177. Our group meets at the Linwood Library every Monday (except when the library closes for national holidays) from 3:30 to 5:15. We welcome everyone and have fun. Honest!

Ethnic Food Group

Jan 7, 2026 @ 1:00

CAFÉ BRU

333 Tilton Road, Northfield, NJ 08225

Our Philosophy at Cafe Bru



Natural Ingredients

All our ingredients come from the freshest suppliers.



Eco-Friendly

We consider the impact of the world, in everything we do!



Family Recipes

Our recipes aren't just recipes - they are heritages.



Made Fresh

Every day, at the crack of dawn, we start fresh!

PLEASE CONFIRM IN OUR PHONE TEXT-GROUP