Word



AAUW some NEWS

News & Views from the West Chester – Chester County PA Branch wccc-pa.aauw.net

> *Volume 65 Number 6 February 2020*

AAUW West Chester-Chester County Branch "We are our Sisters' Keeper: Understanding Issues Facing Black Women and Girls in Chester County"

Presented by Cheryl Miles, MSW, Director of Premanent Housing Services at Good Sam Services in Coatesville

Saturday, February 15th, 10:00 a.m. Grove Methodist Church

BRUNCH: Members bring breakfast dishes, breads, fruit

Cheryl Miles is a social worker with over 30 years experience working with society's most vulnerable populations: the homeless, mentally ill, substance abusers, HIV and domestic violence survivors. She was the winner of the Chester County Fund for Women and Girls 2019 Kitchen Table Award. She is the founder of the Black Women Association of Chester County. Through her work at Good Samaritan Services, Cheryl finds permanent housing for the homeless.

Directions to Grove United Methodist Church, 490 West Boot Road, West Chester, PA 19380: From West Chester, take Route 100 North to Boot Road, turn left, and go toward the intersection of Boot Road and Whitford Road. The church is on the left before you reach the intersection. Find additional direction information at <u>www.grovechurch.org</u> or 610-696-2663.

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Letter from the President

We're not just supplying paper towels and shampoo anymore.

We headed into supporting Decade to Doorways with the intention of supporting a homeless shelter in West Chester. Little did we know that we would be drawn into a commitment to support four of them. At the time we decided to simply divide our support onto fourths and support one shelter each month on a rotating basis.

That plan didn't quite work out as we planned. The parent organization, Decade to Doorways, asked for help with a major event to roll out their plans to publicize the new 211 call center, a place where people in crisis could call to connect to appropriate assistance. We had ten people who helped out at the event, including Cathy Palmquist, who created all of the floral arrangements for the event.

We were then invited to the events of two shelters, the Friends Association and CYWA, both of which value our attendance as a symbol of our support. We attended.

Quick Facts

--Anne Anderko Martina Ossman told the group at our January meeting about the AAUW Book Sale that was held for several years in the late 1960's. She said that about \$900 was raised in 1969, when the membership of our branch was about 125 women. A quick Google search revealed that \$900 in 1969 would be equal to \$6307 today! If that money had been devoted to a scholarship fund, it would have paid the entire year's tuition for three students at West Chester State College, with change left over. Today's in-state tuition is just under \$8000 per year.

The founders of our branch were clearly a competent, impressive group of women!

The Chester County Domestic Violence Center let us know early on that they preferred volunteers to help with their fund-raising gala instead of supplies for their center. We thought this would be a simple matter, until the director gave us a full-page list of activities for which they would like volunteers!

We're not just supplying shampoo and paper towels anymore. No, we have made a commitment to help four shelters, and we have a choice: rise to meet the challenge, or cringe and drop out. We have chosen to rise to the challenge. With 90 capable women in our branch, it's time to show our community that we are an effective and reliable partner in support of women and girls. Not only do the victims of domestic violence depend upon us, but our reputation in the community will be enhanced or diminished by our response to this challenge! Let's give it everything we've got!

Eva Kaufmann/Co-President February 2020

Post Cards Written

At the January meeting, members were coached on writing post cards to their representatives about support of Minimum Wage legislation, since wage equality is a primary focus of AAUW this year. A detailed handout of bills and legislative contacts was provided by the chapter's Public Policy and Legislation committee. Some members also wrote postcards to be forwarded by our speaker, Eunice Anderson, about carbon tax bills.



Impacts of Global Warming, Steps to Take: January Speaker Eunice L. Alexander of Citizens' Climate Lobby -- Jean Speiser



Eunice L. Alexander from the Citizens' Climate Lobby addressed our members at the January 8, 2020 branch meeting. The Citizens' Climate Lobby is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy

organization focused on national policies and on working with members of Congress to address climate change. For more information you may want to visit their website at CitizensClimateLobby.org. all events, "climate change degrades habitat." She pointed out that many Central American immigrants to North America are driven by desertification of their habitat and cited El Salvador and Honduras as particularly egregious examples. We may lose as much as 50% of all land-based life forms by the end of the century and mentioned bumble bees as an example.

Ms. Alexander also mentioned a number of legislative proposals designed to reduce carbon emissions, primarily by making it expensive for manufacturers to continue producing so much carbon. The website is a good place to find information.

She told us that methane, although comprising less than 11% of the noxious greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, may be the most dangerous of all the toxins we are spewing into the air because it degrades very slowly. Greenhouse

gases are most harmful when the ambient temperature exceeds 95° since photosynthesis slows down above that and stops completely at 105°. With global warming storms will become more intense and the prevalence of pests and diseases will increase. Climate change and warming happen unevenly but, in

Carbon Pricing Bills	
 H.R. 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (EICDA) H.R. 4051, the Climate Action Rebate Act ("Coons Bill") H.R. 3966, the Raise Wages, Cut Carbon Act ("Lipinski Bill") H.R. 4520, the Market Choice Act ("Fitzpatrick Bill") H.R. 4058, the Stemming Warming and Augmenting Pay Act ("SWAP Bill") H.R. 4122, the America Wins Act ("Larson Bill") H.R. 1960, the Healthy Climate and Family Security Act ("Van Hollen Bill") 	
S. 1128, the American Opportunity Carbon Fee Act ("Whitehouse Bill")	
(H.R.5221 100 Percent Clean Economy Act ("100 x 50 Act") sets a nat'l goal	1

As individuals and groups there are a number of steps we can take right now: we can switch to alternate heating and energy suppliers; we can divest ourselves from oil and gas investments; we can (and should) develop ongoing-relationships

with our national and local representatives.

And, she noted, on March 28 between 8:30 and 9:30 PM, there will be a national lights-out event during which we will all be encouraged to turn off lights and reduce our energy usage.

REMINDER: Power Weekend March 28-29

Ladies, mark your calendars! The weekend of March 28th and 29th will be the AAUW Power Weekend!

Three big events will occur that weekend:

- 1. GETT
- 2. the Gala for the Domestic Violence Center
- 3. Our celebration of the 60th Anniversary of our branch

GETT (Girls Exploring Tomorrow's

Technology) is a program for girls in grades 4 through 10 in which hands-on activities engage girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). Last year more than 900 girls attended. The date is **Saturday**, **March 28th**, and the program runs from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Great Valley High School in Malvern. We would like to continue our support of this wonderful program with **8-10 volunteers.**

Power Weekend (Continued)

The Domestic Violence Center is one of the four shelters that we are supporting. In lieu of products for the residents there, the director, Dr. Dolly Wideman-Scott, has asked if we could provide volunteers to help out with their huge annual Gala, which raises funds that the shelter relies on each year. Your Community Outreach Committee has already spent hours on helping with mailings for the event, and in follow-up activities including phone calls and collecting gift baskets for the raffle.

The Gala is another matter: Dolly will need 25 or more volunteers to help out at the Gala on the afternoon and evening of **March 28.** A SIGN-UP SHEET was sent around at the January

meeting with specific tasks including setting up tables, checking in the guests, and selling raffle tickets. Our Community Outreach Committee is not large enough to handle all of these jobs, so we will need your help! We would like to be able to offer 15-20 volunteers for this event.

Our third event is all fun and no work: **the celebration of our 60th Anniversary as a branch.** You will be receiving information regarding this lovely event, which will be held in a facility at Crosslands in the afternoon of **March 29th.** Please plan to attend what promises to be a wonderful affair!

Safe Harbor

-- Peggy Staarman

Safe Harbor's mission is to provide housing, food, and access to support services for homeless single women and men in Chester County. This non-profit organization vows to support our neighbors in need until they have a place to call home. Safe Harbor is one of the four partners of Decade to Doorways, our Gateway to Equity Award designee this year.

Branch members generously donated to Safe Harbor in October. We hope that our members will bring donations again to our brunch on Saturday, February 15 to support the shelter and services it provides. Safe Harbor needs the following items:

- Monetary donations (make checks out to Safe Harbor)
- Grocery items: large cans of tomato sauce, large containers of decaffeinated coffee, bottled water, *large bags of frozen mixed vegetables, fish fillets, or French fries (Please let Kim Levan or Peggy Staarman know if you have brought frozen items so that we can place them in the church freezer for safe storage.)
- Large sizes (2X, 3X) men's sweat suits and white tee shirts

Thank you so much for your generosity to Safe Harbor.

Fundraising Update

Teapots



Our "Fill Your Teapot" Campaign is continuing. We handed out porcelain "teapot planters" to members who attended the October/November/January meetings. You are encouraged to use them to collect your loose change between now and May. It may seem like an insignificant amount to you, but when we combine the contents of all the donations, we'll have a nice sum which will be donated to the 4

shelters we are sponsoring this year. At our May 13, 2020 banquet you will turn in your donation and your decorated teapot and we will have a contest for the most creative teapots. Teapots will be available again at the February brunch meeting or you may also contact the Fundraising Co-chairs: Trish Alfano & Marie Knox

WHITE ELEPHANT RAFFLE ITEMS WANTED FOR FEBRUARY BRUNCH

At our Annual Brunch in February 2020, we will be including a FUN-raiser activity. We are seeking donations of "White Elephant" items that will be raffled off during the Brunch. These items should be something you have around the house that you no longer need but think others might enjoy. The item must be small enough to be displayed on an 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper. (Examples: costume jewelry, ceramic bowls, knick-knacks, candle holders, a small present you would like to re-gift, etc.) If you have 1-2 items you would like to donate, please contact us to let us know that you will be bringing an item to the brunch so we are able to have the spaces set up.

Thank you for supporting AAUW programs. Trish Alfano & Marie Knox <u>BA1004@comcast.net</u>

Women's March on Washington, DC

-- Peggy Staarman



On Saturday, January 18, a mighty crowd of women and supportive men traveled to Washington, DC to participate in the fourth Women's March. Mary Smith, Peggy Staarman, Peggy's sister Phyllis Kelly, and Peggy's daughter Jennifer Alansky rode in a bus provided by the activist group Chester County Moving Forward. Fran Pierce also took part in the march. Despite the frigid temperature and threatening skies, the numerous participants were energized by the joint determination, engagement, and activism. Climate change, reproductive rights, equal pay, immigration, affordable healthcare, diversity, and public education were just some of the issues addressed. Clever signs and those pink hats were widespread! Women's suffrage signs, vintage hats, and sashes commemorated 100 years of the right of women to vote. Equality has not yet been attained, but the power of the women's vote was on display on Saturday!



Scholarships Available

Anne Anderko points out two great Lockheed Martin scholarship opportunities/programs to share with your friends, family, and school affiliations.

- Lockheed Martin Vocational Scholarships: up to \$6,600 to as many as 150 recipients this year to fund degrees at accredited vocational-technical schools to prepare students for careers in technology and/or advanced manufacturing that does not require a bachelor's or advanced degree.
- Lockheed Martin STEM Scholarships of \$10,000 per student – renewable each year. The program will continue to add up to 200 new recipients each year, and will be open to individuals studying engineering or computer science that demonstrate financial need and come from underrepresented or underserved communities.

Celebration is Starting: 100 Years pf Suffrage

-- Fran Pierce



IT'S HERE!! The year has arrived! 2020 marks 100 Years since the passage of Suffrage for Women in the U.S. Whether we women have accomplished all that we expected in the past 100 years is a topic for another time, but for this year, we must celebrate!

Here in our branch, we are collaborating with women's groups throughout

Chester County as well as the wider Delaware Valley area to support celebrations of this historic year that will culminate in the celebration of Women's Equality Day on August 26, 2020.

Our branch will publish in this newsletter and on our

website the activities and events that are being produced by area women's groups. Look for the box titled, "Women's Suffrage Anniversary Events" in this and future newsletters.

Our branch contribution will be the sponsoring of an "All County Reads" event that we will coordinate with the Chester County Library System, including not just the Exton Library Center, but also as many of the branch libraries as our members will help us to reach. Our branch committee includes Barb Lathroum, Pam Gray, and Fran Pierce, who met with library representatives in January to make some decisions about the books to choose for three different reading levels: Adults, Young Adults, and Children. Those choices will be finalized on February 19 and then announced on our website and in next month's newsletter.

Once the book has been chosen, we will be asking branch members for volunteers to reach out to your local libraries to help guide a reading discussion on the



book sometime between September and December of this year. Several members have already chosen the library they would like to work with; if you have a local library you would like to contact, please let Fran Pierce, Barb Lathroum, or Pam Gray know as soon as possible!

Without all the women who worked for suffrage throughout our state and nation, the goal could not have been achieved. Without your help reaching out to your local library, our goal cannot be achieved. Please make this your contribution to the important celebration of the event that changed the history of this country for women!

Making a difference! Watch this space!

• March 28th and 29th AAUW Power Weekend (see related article above):

Help with GETT: 8-10 volunteers needed Saturday, **March 28th** from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 to run activities and help with providing information to parents. Contact Mary Smith.

Gala for the Domestic Violence: 15-20 volunteers to help out at the Gala on the afternoon and evening of **March 28.** Also help is needed to prepare. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Eva Kaufmann, Cathy Palmquist, Mimi Jones, or Peggy Staarman.

• West Chester Food Cupboard:

We continue to encourage members to volunteer at the West Chester Food Cupboard at 431 S. Bolmar Street on the last Monday of each month from 6:30 to 7:30. Volunteers are needed to complete tasks like stocking shelves, bagging produce, separating large items into smaller containers, or doing whatever is needed.

Our volunteer number increased a bit last month, but additional volunteers are always welcome. Members who are interested in volunteering or who would like more information about this truly worthwhile cause should contact Jean Shervais at jshervais@verizon.net or call 610-431-9066.

• Laundromat Library League: Book Drive by Miller's Insurance Agency

As you may know, our West Chester-Chester County Branch of AAUW has been a long-time supporter of the Laundromat Library League. Miller's Insurance Agency is collaborating with the Laundromat Library League to hold a book drive from January 20 through February 15. There will be a drop-off box in the lobby of the agency located on 255 West Uwchlan Avenue, Downingtown, PA. This drive is specifically targeting board books, but, as always, the donation of any new or gently used children's books will be appreciated. The LLL is grateful to the owner of the agency, Tom Skelley, who learned about the LLL through one of its fundraisers and was very impressed by its mission. Please let your neighbors and friends know about the book drive. If you live near the agency or are in its vicinity, please consider a donation.



BOOK DRIVE JANUARY 20TH – FEBRUARY 15TH 255 W Uwchlan Ave, Downingtown PA 19335 WE NEED BOOKS FOR TODDLERS! CAN YOU HELP?

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Peggy Staarman (<u>peggstaar@verizon.net</u>) or Arlene Rengert (<u>arengert@gmail.com</u>)

• Community Warehouse Project of Chester County (CWP)

Founded by the Rotary Club of West Chester, this 501c3 organization's mission, "Helping Us Turn Empty Houses into Homes" works with individuals and/or families coming out of a shelter program, suffering from poverty or other hardship who are unable to afford new or used furniture. CWP collects and redistributes donated furniture and household items to needy folks in the county. The CWP is located in Downingtown, and drop-off day is the 3rd Saturday of each month. Another location has opened up for drop-off in West Chester. For further information about donating items or funds, directions to CWP or volunteering, call 484-473-4360. To have someone come to your home and advise you on items, contact Jeannie McGinn, 484-343-4577. NOTE: Bed frames are always needed.

Membership News

Happy 2020! **New incentive to join!** Any new member who joins now is eligible for a discounted and extended membership. The new members' dues are \$55.50, and membership will extend until June,2021! Wow! This incentive should help to increase our membership from 90 to 100! Don't forget to mention it when you talk to your friends about joining. Our goal will be reached to honor the 100th year of the suffragists who won the right to vote for women in 1920!

The January PMP was held at home of Susan Skiles. The Desserts were Delightful! Thank you, Susan for hosting us at your beautiful home. Seven (7) potential members attended & all took an application for membership! Thanks to Phyllis Dunn and Suzy DeGeorge for bringing guests. We hope that each of you will talk to your friends about our branch. Bring someone to a meeting as a guest & let them meet our group. Invite a friend to attend a special interest group with you, it's a more intimate way to get to know us. Feel free to contact either of us with any questions. Patricia:610-436-9752 pls@patriciaschultz.com Susan:610-431-4278 whimziecieux@gmail.com

AAUW Mission Statement: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

Our Chapter - 2019-2020:

Toni Gorkin	Newsletter Editor
610-363-7627	tgorkin@comcast.net
Newsletter email	tgorkin@comcast.net
Eva Kaufmann	Branch Co-President
610-793-3809	<u>ekaufmann1@gmail.com</u>
Anne Anderko	Branch Co-President
484-885-4943	ananderko@msn.com
Barbara Lathroum	Co-Vice President for Program
610-321-9783	<u>blathroum@gmail.com</u>
Jean Speiser	Co-Vice President for Program
610-738-3363	jeansp@gmail.com
Patricia Schultz	Membership Co-Vice President
610-436-9752	pls@patriciaschultz.com
Susan Skiles	Membership Co-Vice President
610-431-4278	
010-451-4278	whimziecieux@gmail.com
Pat Bove	Co-Secretary
610-692-2742	<u>pmbove@aol.com</u>
Carol Haaf	Co-Secretary
610-299-8801	<u>carolahaaf@verizon.net</u>
Susan DeGeorge	Financial Officer
	<u>suzydegeorge@yahoo.com</u>
Branch Website	wccc-pa.aauw.net

Newsletter

The newsletter is published by the first of each month. The deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month. Please send emails to tgorkin@comcast.net. Thank you to everyone who contributes to these issues; it can't be done without you! -- *Toni Gorkin*

Facebook Page

Don't forget to check our Facebook Page. It's **AAUW Chester County PA**. Thank you to Alice Lenthe for getting it up and running.

Chapter Web Page

Thank you to Sandy Alexander for updating the chapter Web Page at <u>https://wccc-pa.aauw.net/</u>. NOTE: Be sure to share your photos with Sandy to keep the content fresh and inviting!

Trifold Brochure

The trifold brochure that describes our chapter has been updated and has been printed. It's a good tool to use when exploring interest with potential new members.

Board Meetings

Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at Board members' homes. The next board meeting will be WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2020, at the home of Trish Alfano, at 7:00 p.m. All members are welcome to attend Board meetings.



Registration is now open for the 2020 AAUW PA State Convention

The Convention

will be held April 24-26, 2020 at The Central Hotel and Conference Center in Harrisburg. A block of rooms as been set aside for AAUW... mention this when you make your reservations. Room rate is \$119.95 plus tax for single or double rooms. Registration costs for the Convention are: \$145 for the full conference (all three days), \$120 for Friday and Saturday, and \$110 for Saturday only.

On Friday evening the speaker will be Elaine Weiss, author of "The Women's Hour."

Special Interest Groups

Women's Social Bridge

The AAUW Chester County-West Chester



Branch Women's Social Bridge meets once a month at 1 pm for two to three hours of friendly bridge. We play contract bridge

and change partners after 6 hands. We meet at a member's home; locations are sent in e-mail reminders each month. All are welcome! To have your name added to the e-mail list, contact Sandy Alexander at

frau.salexander@gmail.com.

The dates for 2019-2020 are:

February 21 March 20 April 17 May 15 June 19 July 17

Couples Bridge

A chair is needed. Please contact one of the presidents if interested.

Mah Jongg

For anyone interested in joining the Mah Jongg group, contact Jennifer Schultz at attorneyjenn@gmail.com for details. Newcomers are welcome - we can teach you how to play.

FIG (Food Interest Group)

This group dines around either at a member's home or at a restaurant. The group usually meets on a Saturday for dinner or Sunday for brunch or dinner on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Couples (unless otherwise specified) and singles, as well as new members, are welcome. **Next event: Sunday, January 26, 5:00 PM** – A Mexican themed dinner, hosted by Carol and Dane Zabriskie. FIG members will receive invitations by email. For more information or to join the group, contact Donna Eaves, FIG chair, at 610-692-5277 or deaves@live.com. We are also looking for members who would like to host or plan a meal at a restaurant in the upcoming months. Please contact Donna if you are interested.

Book Groups:

AAUW branches are known for their book groups, and membership in a group often encourages continuing membership. The West Chester-Chester County Branch currently has two book discussion groups meeting in the day and in the evening at different times of the month.

LIT I: Daytime Literature Group

Fiction & Nonfiction Lit I Book Group meets at 1:00 pm on the third Monday of the month. For the **February 17** meeting the group will read *The Soul of America, the Battle for Our Better Angels*, by Jon Meacham. Any questions? Contact Janet Kane: <u>jfentonkane@gmail.com</u> or 610-399-1149.

LIT II: Evening Literature Fiction & Nonfiction Book Group

Lit Group II will meet on Wednesday, February 19 at 7:00 PM to discuss *The Relic Master*_by Christopher Buckley. Ann Tomalavage will lead the discussion. Our hostess this month is Jean Speiser (JeanSp@Gmail.com). If you are not already receiving emails from Lit Group II, please let her know that you are interested so that you can be informed of any schedule changes or modifications.

Great Decisions

We work with a book produced by the Foreign Policy Association called *Great Decisions* (cost \$30). It contains 8 topics and questions for discussion. Some topics this year include China's geopolitics, Turkey, and Global Health Issues. One person leads and all look for additional material. We meet at the West Chester Diner at 2:00 pm and generally spend approx. 2 hours. The first half hour is social. We usually meet on the second Monday in the month, but since we are a very small group we can be flexible. We would welcome new members. For information contact Jacky Page at 610-359-9887 or jacquelinepage9@gmail.com

TIG (Travel Interest Group)

The Travel Interest Group is composed of members and their guests who like to go to interesting places and often enjoy a meal together before or after. We usually do something 7 or 8 times a year. Please contact Sandy Alexander (<u>frau.salexander@gmail.com</u>), Mary Marco (<u>Mary.m.marco@gmail.com</u>), or Jane Mc Dowell (<u>jlmcdowell@gmail.com</u>) if you want to be on the list for future events. Being on the list does not obligate you to attend any trips. Anyone is welcome to coordinate an event or trip they are interested in.

Stitchers Group

The "Stitchers" meet the first Friday of each month at 10:00 AM. We're meeting at the home of Barbara Lathroum 305 Whistling Swan Lane Downingtown, on February 7. We bring our stitching projects to work on as we chat. We welcome your skills, whatever they may be. Please join us, it's an enjoyable morning. Watch your email for a reminder.

Walkers Group

The group meets on Tuesdays at the Trestle Bridge Trail (officially the Brandywine Meadows Trail) off Rt. 322 near Downingtown. Parking is in the lot near the Trestle Bridge. They leave promptly at 9 A.M. You can walk as fast and as far as you would like. Expect lots of talking and laughter. No emails will go out; just show up and be ready to shove off at 9:00 A.M.Contact Phyllis Dunn at <u>dunn.phyllis@gmail.com</u> to be added to the email contact list.



119 Llandovery Drive, Exton, PA 19341. February 2020 Newsletter Issues Facing Black Women and Girls In Chester County wccc-pa.aauw.net

AAUW Mission Statement

The AAUW advances equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

AAUW Vision Statement

AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

AAUW West Chester – Chester County Branch Vision Statement

- The West Chester-Chester County Branch will
- Actively recruit members who support Association goals.
- Nurture these members through active Interest Groups, through monthly meetings with intellectual and social merit, and through member support.
- Sponsor at least one project per year with volunteers and with funds to promote Association and branch goals.
 - Sponsor at least one local scholarship per year for a nontraditional student
 - Support programs for training and self-development of branch members to promote Association goals.
 - Raise funds through community projects and member gifts to support Association goals.

Since its first meeting in 1881, AAUW has been a catalyst for change. Today, with more than 100,000 members, 1,000 branches, and 500 college and university partners, AAUW contributes to a more promising future and provides a powerful voice for women and girls—a voice that cannot and will not be ignored. www.aauw.org www.aauwpa.org wccc-pa.aauw.net