

AAUW some NEWS

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

Volume 66 Number 7 March 2021



AAUW West Chester-Chester County Branch Presents "The Business of Art in Chester County"

By Jeff Schaller Director of the Chester County Open Studio Tour Wednesday, March 10th at 7:00 p.m. ZOOM Meeting

Mr. Schaller will discuss the paucity of places for artists to display art in the county.

He will discuss how the Open Studio Tour evolved and its future.

Facilitated by Jean Speiser

ZOOM instructions will be emailed in advance

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(Art Photo by RhondaK Native Florida Folk Artist on Unsplash)

Letter from the President

It's almost time to spring forward and welcome more light into our lives both literally and figuratively. With the coming of the new season, we will hopefully see a brighter tomorrow. It is hard to believe that we have been battling Covid-19 for almost a year now. Since then, we became educated on all aspects of this health emergency and our lives have been greatly impacted by the myriad of changes. With the ongoing roll out of the current vaccination program, it's going to take more time to return to normalcy. However in the midst of all this, our AAUW branch is weathering the storm and continues to follow our mission while creating new programs to help women and girls at this crucial time.

Our board met the beginning of February and initiated a number of new projects: a Covid-19 one time scholarship and an upcoming LAPP (Public Policy & Legislation) virtual program on All About Redistricting on March 31st. We have now earned two Gold Stars towards the AAUW National Five Star Recognition Program and are busily working on others. We are getting close to launching our new On Line Learning Program. Although we have not been able to host any PMP's (Perspective Member Parties), we look to add two more members bringing our membership total to 92 members! So as you can see, we have not let the pandemic slow us down as we forge ahead. Please see the accompanying articles on all of the areas I have mentioned for further details.

Unfortunately, with the current health situation, we will continue to hold our monthly branch meetings on Zoom and hope you will join our next one on March 10th. In the meantime, I do hope you and your families are well and I look forward to the day that we can all meet again face to face.

-- Anne Anderko

5 Star Recognition Program

We are happy to report that we recently achieved our second star for Advancement, which required that we maintain 90% of our branch membership and increase the AAUW National Greatest Needs Fund by 25% over last year. We are currently working on the Governance & Sustainability Star. To achieve this star, we needed to create a strategic and succession plan. The strategic plan was approved at the Feb. board meeting, https://wccc-pa.aauw.net/about-us/ and can now be viewed using this link on our web page. We are currently submitting our strategic and succession plans for a third star. We are also working on the Public Policy & Research star with an upcoming March 31 program that will fulfill this goal. Below is the official e-mail sent to us congratulating our branch on achieving the Advancement Star. We are well on our way of achieving four stars. Thanks to everyone for their hard work.

Dear AAUW West Chester-Chester County (PA) Branch.

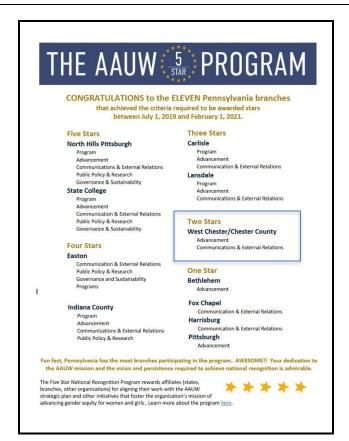
I hope this finds you all safe and well! I'm reaching out to share that your branch achieved a star for the Advancement area of the Five Star Recognition Program. Congratulations!

It's more important than ever that we do what we can to support women's economic security and equality of opportunity. Thank you for your generous contributions to AAUW's Greatest Needs Fund which allows us the flexibility to respond to unexpected challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, and your commitment to the future of your branch in the fight for gender equity.

Your achievement will be recognized in the February 2021 national Membership Matters News Hub.

Thank you for your participation in the Five-Star Recognition Program and all you do for AAUW's mission. We look forward to your continued Five-Star success.

All the best, Nichia P. McFarlane Engagement Associate, Advancement & Partnerships AAUW, 1310 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20005-4113



February10th Monthly Meeting

Anne Anderko sent out a recap of the meeting. If you missed the meeting, please use this link https://vimeo.com/510956171. The password to view the video are the same as the password printed in your 2020-2021 handbook-on the inside of the front cover.

Check out the excellent short video that was presented . . . it will make you smile. https://youtu.be/sECdk6nu_Uk

Covid 19 Scholarship – 2021 One-Time Project

-- Deborah Liczwek

Every year our AAUW branch awards a scholarship to one non-traditional student living in Chester County or attending one of Chester County's colleges: Cheyney, Immaculata, Lincoln or West Chester. This scholarship -- at the present time it is \$1500 – is funded by a bequest in the will of Alice Lawson who was a member of our branch for many years. We often have multiple worthy applicants and choosing just one recipient can be a heartbreaking task.

Every year our AAUW branch selects a worthy area entity as our "Gateway to Equity" awardee that we support both monetarily and through inkind contributions or volunteer efforts as well. Our current Gateway to Equity awardee is the West Chester University Resource Pantry, whose mission is to provide assistance to students whose own resources are very limited. For example, students should not have to choose between textbooks and food.

However in the 2020-2021 academic year, with the campus operating virtually, the need for the Resource Pantry's assistance has decreased significantly while the already enormous need for assistance with tuition and other college-related expenses has increased significantly. Virtual education isn't free while the opportunities for oncampus employment and off-campus employment have plummeted.

The Board asks our members to consider switching focus for the remainder of the 2020-2021 year to support a one-time additional scholarship to address this temporary environment. We do not know yet whether we will select another recipient or will give this additional money to the Alice Lawson recipient. We would be delighted if we could award another \$1,500, but of course any amount we raise will be helpful. Even a small contribution will be appreciated.

Please send your check to Suzy DeGeorge, 922 Sage Rd., West Chester, PA 19382 by March 15th. The check should be addressed to the West Chester-Chester County AAUW and put Covid 19 scholarship in the memo line.

It's All About Zoom!



Here's what we look like these days.,, this is Lit I at their February Zoom meetings! Thanks to technology, we are staying very active.

Zoom Etiquette

-- Sandy Alexander

Tip #1 - Once the meeting has officially started, participants should mute their microphones. Here's a good article explaining how to do this:

https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.howtogeek.com/670311/how-to-mute-yourself-on-a-zoom-call/amp/

Tip #2 - If a participant has a question, there are two ways to be recognized. Either use the Raise Hand button in Reactions or type the question in the Chat area. Here's a link explaining how to raise your hand:

https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-raise-hand-in-zoom

And a Virtual TIG!

-- Sandy Alexander

It's March and many of us are still waiting to get a Covid vaccine. While we still can't travel in person, here's another site offering virtual tours: https://www.girltraveltours.com/virtual-tours?fbclid=IwAR2ASjacmTwEyNZwL4A0q1n HVUc6a9ouzMp48887yG0lmutE5WsZfshHvu8

Registration is free and if you wish, there is an option to tip the tour guide. (They have been out of work for a long time.) Enjoy tours of cities all over the world, experience "Mystery on the Orient Express," or learn about "Musical Britain" or "Literary UK." (continued on next page)

Reminder: Videos of Branch Programs Available to Stream

Did a schedule conflict or technological problem keep you from attending a branch program? You can stream recordings of the programs from our website — it's as easy as streaming on Netflix or Hulu! Here are the four easy steps to do it.

1. Just visit wccc-pa.aauw.net and click on **Members Only** under **About Us**.



- 2. To protect everyone's privacy, you will need to enter the password that is on the inside cover of your Handbook.
- 3. Click on the date of the program you wish to view and type the password on the inside cover of your Handbook one more time before clicking on **Submit**.
- 4. Then just click on the picture to start the video.



Lucerne & the Alps (Mar. 9) Click image to register

Virtual TIG (continued)

The site is organized by Girl Travel Tours: GTT sends local Girl Scouts on educational, service-learning trips all over the world to help deepen its Girl Scouts' understanding of other cultures, develop new perspectives on local and global issues, and strengthen leadership skills necessary for global citizenship.

Zoom Reminder – Need a Meeting?

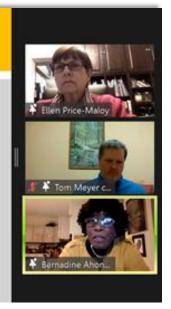
Zoom coordinator Sandy Alexander is busy hosting many meetings for our branch. In addition to the monthly branch meetings, the Board, Lit I, II and III, the Stitchers, L.A.P.P. and Tutors are all meeting on Zoom. If your committee or SIG needs to meet on Zoom, please involve Sandy when selecting a day and time. One week notice is appreciated; emergency situations will be accommodated if possible.

February Branch Meeting: Coalition for Racial Equity and Social Justice

-- Jean Speiser

Coalition for Racial Equity and Social Justice

- Overarching <u>GOALS</u> of Coalition4justice:
- Provide a safe space for meaningful and authentic conversations about Racism and Discrimination
- Educate/Train in order to create awareness and deeper understanding of <u>America's hard history and lived</u> experiences of people of color (POC) and <u>other marginalized</u> groups, and
- Work to impact policies that promote racist ideologies and false narratives about a group of Americans.



Three presenters at our February Zoom-held meeting told our branch about the topic "A Coalition for Racial Equity and Social Justice." Ellen Price-Maloy, the diversity Chair of the AAUW's Lansdale branch and Bernadine Ahonkhai, a member of that branch, along with Tom Meyer, the director of the Lansdale Public library, joined forces following George Floyd's murder to create a coalition addressing racial injustice in the community and how to combat it. The result is the Coalition4Justice that, in a short time, has come together very effectively to present monthly educational programs to the members of the community as well as to develop a core group addressing racial injustice and inequity and to bring about much-needed and measurable change in society.

Speakers at the February meeting explained the formation and goals of the Coalition4Justice.

Dr. Ahonkhai opened with a thought-provoking series of slides that briefly highlighted the history of community policing and violence in the United States starting with pre-civil war slave codes and continuing until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that abolished Jim Crow laws in the United States. These laws perpetuated white supremacy and significantly reduced Black people's ability to relocate, to hold all but the most menial jobs and, of course, to get a good education.

Even though the 1964 Act made significant improvements, much remains to be done, as can *(continued on next page)*

Coalition4Justice (continued)

be seen by the deaths in the not-so-distant past of George Floyd, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Freddie Grey, and Philando Castile to name but a few, all of whom were killed while interacting with the police.

George Floyd's murder in particular terrified Dr. Ahonkhai, who is originally from Nigeria, because she has adult sons and two grandsons, ages eight and three, all of whom are Black, and she worries about their safety every time they walk out the door. She reached out to friends in the community and her AAUW branch, as well as to Tom Meyer at the Lansdale public library. They founded the Coalition4Justice in June 2020 as a collaboration between the Lansdale branch of the AAUW and the Lansdale public library. The original group was composed of just twelve

people; today its core base contains seventy people who are actively engaged with the organization.

The group presents monthly programs to the public as well as meeting monthly with core group members to work on education and techniques to bring about the change that is the mission of the organization. Past meetings have considered such topics as how to talk to non-Black children about racism, the intersection between racial equity and public health in the United States, a discussion of the book *White Fragility*, and showing the movie *John Lewis: Good Trouble*.

For more information, visit Coalition4Justice com

AAUW to Host Virtual Presentation on Creating Fair Voting Districts



Speaker: Charlie Day, Fair Districts PA
Title: "All About Redistricting"
Date: Wednesday March 31, 2021
Time: 7:00 PM





Democracy means voters choose their politicians. Current Pennsylvania law lets politicians choose their voters. Gerrymandering: the practice of manipulating voting districts to benefit parties, not people. The result is voters have less voice and less choice, and leads to further polarization instead of problem solving in Harrisburg and Washington.

(Map of PA 7th old congressional district)

- All are welcome to attend this informative presentation followed by Q&A
- To register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUscO6rpz8uGtQRoRfZzWvrQ4nBbBudRnsi

• Space is limited to 100 respondents on a first come basis.

Charlie Day is a volunteer with Fair Districts PA. He has management experience at several non-profit and governmental organizations, including the U.S. EPA, the PA Environmental Council, the American Society of Civil Engineers, and Temple University. He served as an officer in the U.S. Navy and holds a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree from University of Pennsylvania.

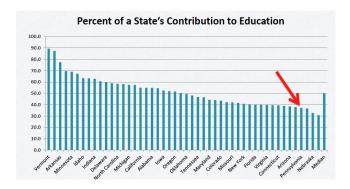
AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

Fair Districts PA is a nonpartisan, statewide coalition of organizations and individuals working to create a process for redistricting that is transparent, impartial, and fair.

L.A.P.P. Call to Action: PA Fair Funding for Public Schools

-- Deb Liczwek

In the 2018-2019 school year, Pennsylvania public schools came up short by about \$4.6 billion in state funding. Experts described our state's public school finance system as unequal and inadequate - 86 percent of students are not adequately funded. The Public Interest Law Center and the Education Law Center have filed suit against legislative leaders, state education officials, and the Governor, hoping to change this by asking for a court order to force our legislature to comply with the state constitution and ensure all students receive access to a high-quality public education. However, this will take time and their suit might not be successful.



Fund Kids Over Racehorses

In the meantime, what can we do? And from where will additional funding come? There's one place to start where the state could find money, and the effort is called: **Fund Kids Over Racehorses.** The organization Education Voters PA identified that the Race Horse Development Fund provides \$240 million per year in taxpayer-funded subsidies to wealthy horseracing enthusiasts and hobbyists. Since 2004,

Pennsylvania's horse racing industry has received a staggering \$3 billion in revenues. Do they really need subsidies to pad cash prizes and inflate pensions for wealthy horse owners, breeders, and trainers? The money also funds drug testing for horses and advertising costs for racetrack marketing, among other things. However, the system is rife with conflicts of interest; the industry regulatory body is run by the very beneficiaries of the millions of dollars of state subsidies. Instead of funding wealthy horse hobbyists, we should be putting those hundreds of millions in annual subsidies toward Pennsylvania students. It's time to start putting the education of children over the hobbies of the wealthy and invest those hard-earned tax dollars where they belong: Pennsylvania's students. The commonwealth must look ahead. The best investment we can make is in Pennsylvania's future – by investing in public education and providing a solid foundation for students. That is the winning bet. For more information visit www.kidsoverhorseracing.org

If you agree, please contact your state lawmakers. You can tell them the following: "I am a constituent concerned about our state's funding of public education. I do NOT support Pennsylvania's subsidies for horse racing. We need to fund kids over racing horse. Please work to redirect the funds from the Race Horse Development Fund into the General Fund Budget to be invested into supporting Pennsylvania's public school students."

PA Representative	District	PA Senate	District
John A. Lawrence (R)	13	Carolyn T. Comitta (D)	19
(610) 869-1602		(717) 787-5709 or (610) 692-211	12
Christina D. Sappey (D)	158	John I. Kane (D)	9
484-200-8264		(717) 787-4712 or (717) 756-154	48
Dianne Herrin (D)	156	Katie J. Muth (D)	44
(610) 696-4990		(717) 787-1398 or (610) 792-213	7
Dan K. Williams (D)	74	Timothy P. Kearney (D)	26
(484) 200-8256		(717) 787-1350 or (610) 544-612	0
Kristine C. Howard (D)	167	or (610) 352-3409	
(610) 251-1070			
Danielle Friel Otten (D)	155		
(484) 200-8259			
Tim Hennessey (R)	26		
(610) 326-2626			

Be Prepared for the May 18, 2021 Municipal Primary Election

EMPOWERING OUR VOTERS and GOTV (Get Out The Vote) are the most important priorities of the **League of Women Voters**. Election Day is Tuesday May 18, 2021 and IT IS NOT TOO EARLY to make sure that you are prepared.

Go to www.votespa.com (PA's OFFICIAL VOTER INFORMATION WEBSITE) and be prepared to vote on May 18.

Go to www.votespa.com to:

- 1. Register to Vote
- 2. Confirm your registration
- 3. Make any needed changes

- 4. Find your polling place
- 5. Apply for a mail-in ballot
- 6. Check status of your mail-in ballot
- 7. Access more voter information

PA is a closed primary state. You must be a registered Democrat or Republican to vote for a candidate in a primary. All voters, however, are permitted to vote for a ballot question in a primary.

Pass this information on to others. Thank you for helping to empower other voters.

www.lwvccpa.org

www.facebook.com/LWVofChesterCounty 610-644-5960

MEMBERSHIP

-- Patricia Schultz & Susan Skiles

Attention: National Dues are now \$62! The state (\$10) and branch (\$16) dues stay the same, therefore the total renewal for 2021-2022 is \$88. We are focusing on RETENTION this year but are always eager to add new members! The fee for new members is \$57.00. Still a great deal! This is applicable after March 15, 2021 & anyone joining after that date her membership will be extended until June 30, 2022.

We hope that EACH OF YOU will talk to your friends about our branch and send us their contact information so we can speak to them directly.

Patricia:610-436-9752 pls@patriciaschultz.com Susan: 610-431-4278 whimziecieux@gmail.com

No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.

Robin Williams



Who can join AAUW?

This question is coming before our members this spring at the national level. The question is, should we eliminate the college degree requirement for membership? There are several reasons why it is coming up for a vote. In the February issue of our newsletter, Eva Kaufmann, in her role on the PA Board of AAUW, outlined some points of view. In

addition, that issue included a statement by Ann Pehle, President of AAUW-PA. Our members have asked questions about the issue. **Please refer back to the February issue of the AAUW newsletter for information.**

AAUW Mission Statement:

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

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610-431-4278	whimziecieux@gmail.com
Diane Dougherty	Recording Secretary
610-363-9399	joedidoc@gmail.com
Carol Haaf	Corresponding Secretary

Newsletter

The newsletter is published by the first of each month except for the summer months. The deadline for submissions is the 10th of the **month** to ensure the issue can be distributed on the first of the next 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 running it.

Website

Check it out at wccc-pa.aauw.net. Also, a reminder: The website and Facebook page are most effective if they have up-to-date information. It is our public face. If you are sending Toni Gorkin pictures for the newsletter, make sure to copy them to Sandy Alexander at frau.salexander@gmail.com and Alice Lenthe at alicelenthe@gmail.com. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words!



610-299-8801

Susan DeGeorge

Branch Website

Special Interest Groups

Note: Because of the Covid-19 Coronavirus Stay-at-Home/Safe Distancing orders, meetings have been cancelled, but some groups are using virtual meeting options.



Women's Social Bridge

To have your name added to the e-mail list,









contact Sandy Alexander at frau.salexander@gmail.com. The social bridge group is meeting virtually until further notice.

carolahaaf@verizon.net

suzydegeorge@yahoo.com

Financial Officer

wccc-pa.aauw.net

Couples Bridge

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

Mah Jongg

Contact is Kim Glavin at kimglavin@comcast.net

FIG (Food Interest Group)

On hiatus until further notice. Contact: Donna Eaves, FIG chair, at 610-692-5277 or deaves@live.com.

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 three book discussion groups meeting in the day and one 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. Lit I is using Zoom for virtual meetings. The schedule of books is posted on the chapter webpage. Contact: Janet Kane: jfentonkane@gmail.com or 610-399-1149. The group will discuss *The Single Ladies of Jacaranda Retirement Village*, by Joanna Nell, on March 15.

LIT II: Evening Literature Fiction & Nonfiction Book Group

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Right now we are meeting virtually; contact Jean Speiser (<u>JeanSp@Gmail.com</u>) for the Zoom link. The group will discuss *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates on March 17.

LIT III: Daytime Fiction & Nonfiction Book Group

This group meets on the first Tuesday of each month. The schedule is also posted on the chapter internet page. Contact: Carol Haaf 610-793-5086 or carolahaaf@verizon.net. The group will discuss *The Nickel Boys*, by Colson Whitehead, on March 2.

TIG (Travel Interest Group)

The Travel Interest Group is on virtual only hiatus until conditions improve. Contacts are: Sandy Alexander (frau.salexander@gmail.com), Mary Marco (Mary.m.marco@gmail.com), or Jane McDowell (jlmcdowell@gmail.com).

Virtual Escapes

See related article earlier in this issue about Virtual Tours with Girl Travel Tours.

And there are always virtual escapes at (https://www.wildjunket.com/armchair-travel-how-to-travel-without-leaving-home/) for 45 fun ideas for how to "travel" without leaving home. Tour a museum, visit a UNESCO site, take a digital hike in a National Park, read travel-related books or blogs, learn a new language, watch travel-related shows on Netflix and more!

Walkers Group

The group is not meeting as a group for now, but Walkers are encouraged to walk on their own and use safe distancing practices. Contact: Phyllis Dunn at dunn.phyllis@gmail.com

Stitchers Group

Patricia Schultz will send reminders each week. Stitchers meet every Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Please mark your calendars and join us for creative stitching & interesting conversations! Contact Patricia to be added to the mailing list. pls@patriciaschultz.com



119 Llandovery Drive, Exton, PA 19341.

March 2021 Newsletter

The Business of Art 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