



AAUWsome NEWS

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

Volume 70 Number 5
 February 2025

February Meeting: Wednesday, February 12th 6:30 p.m.
“157th District of Pennsylvania House of Representatives”
Speaker: Melissa Shusterman
Grove Methodist Church

As a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for the 157th District, Melissa will speak about what it is to be a woman in politics as well as to review pending legislation designed to help women specifically

March: BRUNCH MEETING Saturday, March 8th, 10:00 a.m.
“Diversity, Equity & Inclusion” -- Speaker: Ajla Glavasevic
Grove Methodist Church

As the AAUW officer in charge of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Ajla will be speaking on DEI—hopefully with a personal twist on her own experiences as an immigrant

Refreshment provided by all members – see details in article below!

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 www.grovechurch.org or 610-696-2663.

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Letter from the Presidents

*Here's to strong women. May we know them.
May we be them. May we raise them.*

-- Amy Rees Anderson

Welcome to the February Newsletter!

I saw the stage production of SUFFS in New York in January, which left me alternately clapping or crying, as the musical focuses on the largely unknown social pioneers who emerged in the seven-year run-up to the passage of the 19th Amendment. These were feisty and strategic women who chafed at the previous generation of suffragists unwilling to use disruptive forms of activism. It has completed its run in New York, but it will begin a national tour. As a woman and AAUW member I highly recommend you see it to be reminded of the struggle women have gone through for the right to vote.

And our fight as women continues today as we focus on the right to control our own bodies, push for equal pay in the work place, bring an end to workplace sexual harassment, and advocate for educational policies that support and protect programs that meet the needs of girls and women in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. Let our mission be known, we need AAUW now more than ever.

I want to share some news from PA

AAUW:

The Governor's Budget Address is on February 4th. The state will share the link to the budget address once it is available. If you are not receiving emails from AAUW National -- especially the Membership Matters -- check your email address on the link - aauw.us/emailoption.

News from National AAUW

If you haven't already, please go to aauw.org to stay current on AAUW issues, plans for actions, webinars and classes you can take on key topics.

Write to Your Senators

AAUW opposes Linda McMahon's nomination for Secretary of Education. We are deeply concerned about her views on public education, students' civil rights, and the purpose of higher education. We urge you to make your voice heard — [write to your senators now](#).

Make sure you receive the emails from National to keep you informed of the issues, action and goals of AAUW National.

News from West Chester Chester County AAUW

Join us for our next meeting on February 12th to hear Representative Melissa Shusterman member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for the 157th District. This is the time to connect with other members.

Please keep a watch on your inbox for a request to submit a member's name for the **Member Making A Difference Award, the Peg Anderson Award and an individual or organization for the Gateway to Equity Award**. Ballot submissions will be due the end of February. To learn about these awards, please read requirements and descriptions article in the newsletter below.

Please consider stepping **up and in** to an open position within the branch The goal for this year is to promote our organization's mission of supporting women and girls by embedding this in each committee/activity/outreach and to prepare AAUW for the now and embrace change. Please help us to support this goal by becoming actively involved.

No organizational goal can be achieved without the active engagement of its members.

Warmly,

Nancy Paist-Riches and Beryl Goldman
Co-Presidents AAUW

***Annual Brunch: Saturday, March 8th, 2025
10:00 a.m.***

***Grove United Methodist Church
Speaker: Ajla Glavasevic***

“Diversity, Equity & Inclusion”

As the AAUW officer in charge of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Ajla will be speaking on DEI with a personal twist on her own experiences as an immigrant.

Members please bring a brunch item that serves about 10 people; include a serving utensil and please label your food item to alert those with food allergies. Suggestions include: breakfast dishes, breads, and fruits. Beverages will be provided.

***RSVP to Brenda Hunsberger at:
bghunsberger@comcast.net for attendee count!***

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 www.grovechurch.org or 610-696-2663.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS UPDATE

-- Anne Anderko. Susan Woron -- Co Vice Presidents/Membership

Since our last membership update, we have recruited two new members, Fredda Maddox (see bio) and Sharon Richardson. Along with the nine new members in the past 3 months, we now have a total of eighty-five members in our affiliate. Recently an addendum was sent out with all the new members added this fiscal year. Please take the time to download and attach this to your handbook for reference.

We are interested in reaching out to surrounding colleges and universities to increase student membership. This will help bring in younger members as well as provide opportunities for networking and engagement. Our first step would

be to form a committee of interested people who may have connections to colleges in our area. If you would like to help us connect to area colleges, please contact either of us as soon as possible.

Susan and I are very encouraged by our growing numbers but need your help to continue to grow our membership. You can help by spreading the word and passing out business cards (we have more) given to you at the beginning of the year, inviting interested guests to our monthly meetings, interest groups, or holding a small Prospective Members' Party (PMP) at your home. We thank you for your support. We cannot do this alone.

Welcome to New Member the Honorable Judge FREDDA LEWIS MADDOX



Judge Fredda Lewis Maddox is the first African American woman to serve on the Chester County Court of Common Pleas since the founding of the County by William Penn in 1682. Her public service career began in law enforcement as a

Pennsylvania State Trooper in Chester County. Her career advanced and she was subsequently hired by the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General, where she served as a Narcotics Agent in the Bureau of Narcotics.

After attending evening classes at Widener University Law School, Judge Lewis Maddox later joined the Defender Association of Philadelphia where she served as a child advocate attorney for over a decade. In addition, she has served as a staff attorney at the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County, securing the protection of and providing a voice to victims of domestic violence, and as an associate attorney at Rovito Law, LLC in West Chester, Pennsylvania, a highly regarded family law practice. Known for her tireless advocacy of children she was appointed by the Chester County Court of Common Pleas to handle child welfare cases in Chester County.

Before being elected to the Court of Common Pleas, in November 2019, Judge Fredda Lewis Maddox was elected Sheriff of Chester County. Her election made her the first African American woman to be sworn in as an elected Sheriff in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In addition to a law degree, Judge Lewis Maddox holds a Master of Science in Public Administration from West Chester University and a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Edinboro State College.

Welcome New Member JUDY SAUNDERS

Judy grew up forty miles west of Boston, Massachusetts. After high school she received an associate's degree in medical secretarial science from the Salter Secretarial School in Worcester, MA. Upon graduation, she worked in dermatology and general surgery medical practices. She returned to further her education by obtaining an ADN from Kenosha Technical College, in Kenosha, WI. She worked as an RN at the Baylor School of Orthopedic Surgery in Houston, TX. After moving to PA, she worked for physicians in Pediatrics, OB/GYN, and dermatology practices.

After twenty years in medicine, she decided to change her profession to honor a lifelong dream to become a teacher. She graduated with a B.S. in Elementary Education from Cabrini University, in Radnor, PA., in 1992 and a M.A. in Education from Cabrini University in 1998 and completed post graduate studies at St. Joseph's University in 2006-2007.

She became an elementary teacher with the Haverford School District and taught fifth and second grade for twenty-four years. After retiring, she moved to Hershey's Mill to become part of an active adult community. She has been an educational assistant and museum guide at the Chester County History Center for the last six years and a tour guide at Historic Sugartown for the last four years.

For the past six years, she has been attending the Lifelong Learning classes offered by Widener University. She enjoys gardening, biking, walking, book club and traveling. She always looks forward to returning to her New England roots where many family members still reside.



A Reference guide for choosing a recipient for the following AAUW Awards - (also found in your handbook)

MEMBER MAKING A DIFFERENCE - recognition of recent term contributions by an unsung hero who exemplifies the spirit of AAUW.

*Any member may nominate an awardee to create a slate of nominees and will be asked to provide a brief rationale indicating the reason for their nomination. Members will vote on the slate of nominees to determine the final recipient of the award.

*A person cannot receive both the Member Making a Difference and Peg Anderson Award in the same year.

*This award will be presented at the May banquet.

*This award may not be repeated within 3 years.

PEG ANDERSON AWARD - **longstanding member who has served in many capacities** over the years and **continues to work** in the background to inspire and support those who are now leaders and members.

*Any member may nominate an awardee to create a slate of nominees, and will be asked to provide a brief rationale indicating the reason for their nomination. The board will make the final selection of the awardee.

*A person cannot receive both the Member Making a Difference and Peg Anderson award in the same year.

*This award will be presented at the May banquet.

*This award may not be repeated within 3 years.

GATEWAY TO EQUITY AWARD - individual or organization that has shown by action and philosophy the promotion of the AAUW mission.

*Any member may nominate an individual or organization and provide specific details and documentation regarding the type of support requested.

*Board reviews the nominees and prepares a slate of no more than 5 nominees based upon the best matches with our ability to support and align with our mission.

*Members vote on the slate.

Laundromat Library League

-- Arlene Rengert



The Laundromat Library League (LLL) keeps growing. We now have 286 sites in 34 states plus 3 laundromats in Guam. We have over 930 volunteers and supporters who serve as stewards, lead book drives, donate through their companies, help sort and organize books, attach LLL labels to our books, purchase multicultural and Spanish books, and help in other ways. We are grateful that members of the West Chester-Chester County AAUW affiliate serve as volunteers. One new AAUW member has recently offered to contact a local laundromat and serve as a steward. Community members and organizations generously donate books and financial support, but the need for books continues as we expand the number of our sites.

If you would like to help with our mission to give free books to children who may have few or no books at home, please contact Peggy Staarman (peggstaar@verizon.net). Thank you so much!



Oh What Fun!!

On December 19, Rhonda McNitt, Karen Marshall and Suzy DeGeorge volunteered at the Avondale Firehall for one of MCHC's Christmas parties. We bagged cookies and helped set up and serve food. A joy-filled atmosphere hung in the air as children talked to Santa, made crafts, had a snack, and received a bag of presents (which we contributed towards).

The families were so appreciative and the MCHC staff were welcoming. We even increased our Spanish vocabulary! Cookie=galleta. The fun continued at the West Chester location on December 20, where Susan Woron Beardsly helped out. Approximately 400 families would be served during the Christmas parties.

February: Books for Children

Our February activity in support of MCHC is a book drive. Any children's books are welcome, and MCHC has especially requested bi-lingual / Spanish books. Books for ages 0-5 are best.



Once purchased, you can get the books to us in several ways:

1. Bring the book to our monthly meeting on February 12.
2. If you buy books online, you can ship directly to:
Suzy DeGeorge
922 Sage Road
West Chester, PA 19382
3. Drop off books to Suzy at the address above.

Let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued support of MCHC!
Arlene Cohen
arlene.cohen@verizon.net
610.547.8380



Monthly Warehouse Project Volunteer Program December and January

-- Anne Anderko, Chair



Christine Batchelor and Robin Paragone unpacked kitchen items

Even with the holiday, we had two volunteers on December 18th unpack boxloads of pots and pans and kitchen items. A big thank you to Robin Paragone and our new member, Christine Batchelor, who gave of their time during the busy season. On January 15, Karen Korbonits and Steph Mitman met on a very chilly morning to unpack boxes and organize linens. Thanks to their hard work, we left the warehouse with everything put away ready to be donated to the next family or veteran in need.



Karen Korbonits and Steph Mitman organized linens

If you haven't signed up to volunteer, please e-mail me your name and let me know what months will work for you. I select two members each month, the third

Wednesday of the month to volunteer from 10:00 to noon. I try to give as many members a chance to volunteer and learn about the warehouse's mission. Just a reminder that the warehouse is always collecting gently used household items. You can contact me, ananderko@msn.com if you would like to drop them at my house or bring them to our next in person meeting on February 12th. The warehouse thanks you for your continued support.

January Meeting: Chiwoneso Tinago-Shamaki

At January's Zoom meeting, we heard about our affiliate member Chiwoneso Tinago-Shamaki's transformational journey to higher education and the very important role AAUW played in empowering her as an educated woman, an academic professor, and a mentor to young women.

Chiwo described how expectations for her, as a girl in Zimbabwe,



were low, but her parents ensured she and her sister got an education. Coming to the US, she achieved a BS in Psychology at William Carey University, then earned an MA in Public Health at the University of

Southern Mississippi. She surmounted many challenges along the way. After working in Zimbabwe educating in public health, she returned to the US for doctoral studies at the University of

South Carolina. There she received an AAUW international fellowship, which was integral for paying for her doctoral tuition in her third year, enabling her to travel to Zimbabwe to finish her PhD dissertation research. Her studies were focused on the influences on the health of pregnant women, a subject she has pursued in further research, education programs, and mentoring of young women students.

Chiwo is now a tenured Professor at West Chester University, in the Department of Public Health Sciences. She is Chair of WCU's Global Initiatives Committee. As Program Director for the Certificate in Global Health she has developed a 12-course online virtual Global Health certificate program. She has focused on health issues across the world especially for women, and best practices to address them. She supports students, for example, with World Health Organization Simulations in London and elsewhere. Her research and her teaching and her mentoring – her life's work -- What can be done to reduce maternal mortality?

TIG Visits Hagley Museum

-- Mary Marco

Some publicity tidbits for the new year - the Travel interest group made a holiday visit to the Hagley museum in Wilmington, Delaware to learn about the beginnings of the Dupont company. The gunpowder mills, started by the company, were crucial to the Union's cause during the Civil War. Also on the tour was the first Dupont home, Eleutherian Mills, which sits high above the Brandywine River and showcased traditional holiday decorations. Following the tour we gathered for lunch at Pizza by Elizabeth.



Alice Lawson Scholarship Expanded; Help Get the Word Out!

It is time to get the word out about the fabulous scholarship available for non-traditional female students. The scholarship this year is the largest our affiliate has ever offered, \$14,600. Members, please spread the word, and direct women to our website or Facebook page. If you have connections with local colleges or universities, please contact them directly.

Member Notes

Sympathy Note

A sad note from Jane Schultz that her daughter Jennifer's life partner of twenty years, Rich, passed away. He received a diagnosis of metastatic cancer in January of this year. Jennifer and her family are heartbroken. As many of you know, Jenn was an active member of our AAUW book club for a number of years and Rich joined her often at AAUW events. He loved attending our holiday parties. If you would like to send a card to Jennifer, her address is
8816 Ridge Avenue
#6
Philadelphia, PA 19128-2031

Winter Seed Sowing

Anne Anderko and her family joined Jean Speiser at the home of Toni Gorkin to do winter sowing – sowing native plant seeds in plastic jugs to undergo winter cold stratification. The seedlings that will emerge in the spring – milkweed, butterfly weed, cone flower, etc. -- will grace their gardens as well as Toni's Heart of Uwchlan gardens.



AAUW Mission Statement:
**To advance gender equity for women and girls through research,
 education, and advocacy.**
Our Chapter – 2024-2025:

<i>Toni Gorkin</i> 484-868-1872 Newsletter email	Newsletter Editor tgorkin@gmail.com tgorkin@gmail.com
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<i>Susan Woron*</i> 484-467-6705	Membership Co-Vice President sworon54@gmail.com
<i>Anne Anderko</i> 484-885-4943	Membership Co-Vice President ananderko@msn.com
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<i>Robin Paragone</i> 484-844-2161	Corresponding Secretary rparagone905@gmail.com
<i>Jane Schultz</i> 484-467-6835	Financial Officer mjschultz46@gmail.com
<i>Branch Website</i> *newly elected	wccc-pa.aauw.net

Social Media

-- Sandy Alexander

Be sure to send pictures and information to Sandy for our branch's Facebook Page: West Chester-Chester County AAUW! She will be creating events for our speakers as well as any event open to guests, and will post pictures showing people having fun at social activities. Send them to fb4aauw@gmail.com.

And don't forget to copy Toni Gorkin at tgorkin@gmail.com for the newsletter and Rhoda McNitt at rhodamcnitt@verizon.net for the web page.

Newsletter

The newsletter is published by the first of each month. 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@gmail.com.

Finance Officer's Report

Beginning Checking Account Balance July 1, 2024	\$8,098.17
Ending Checking Account Balance December 31, 2024	\$8,545.97
Mimi Jones Scholarship Fund <i>(Dedicated line item within the checking account)</i>	\$2,056.00
Vanguard Account December 31, 2024 <i>(Harriet Jarosh Environmental Education Fund)</i>	\$15,766.26
Chester County Community Foundation December 31, 2024 <i>(Alice Lawson Scholarship Fund)</i>	\$286,988.80
	YTD
	July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024
TOTAL Income	\$11,519.50
TOTAL Disbursements	\$11,071.70
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$447.80

Board Meeting

Board Meetings are 7 – 9 PM, first THURSDAY of the Month [unless otherwise noted]. The Board Meetings will be via ZOOM [unless otherwise noted]. The February meeting will be a ZOOM meeting on February 6th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.



Special Interest Groups



Mah Jongg

Pat Schultz is coordinating Mah Jongg. We meet on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays at various homes starting at 1:00 PM. We usually play around 2 hours. We play with new and seasoned players. Pat sends an email reminder to our players about three days to a week in advance. For more information contact Pat Schultz at 610-322-0514.

TIG (Travel Interest Group)

Contact Mary Marco at mary.m.marco@gmail.com or Jane McDowell at Jlwmcdowell@gmail.com.

FIG (Food Interest Group)



Food Interest Group (FIG) explores new foods through thematically planned potlucks at member's homes or at local restaurants. The group meets on weekends for either brunch or dinner. Partners and singles are usually

welcome. Invitations will be sent to FIG members, but attendance is open to all affiliate members. Contact Donna Eaves, deaves@live.com, to be added to the mailing list.

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.

LIT I: Daytime Literature Group

Fiction & Nonfiction Lit I Book Group will meet at 1:00 pm on the third Monday of the month. our next meeting is on **Monday, February 17** at the home of **Eva Kaufmann** (*note the change from the original schedule*). The book we are scheduled to discuss is: ***The Women of Great Heron Lake*** by Deanna Lynn Stettin. However, issues with availability may cause a change. **Watch for email updates.** Contact: Janet Kane 610-742-5961 - jfentonkane@gmail.com

LIT II: Literature Fiction & Nonfiction Book Group

We are now meeting in the afternoon, so we welcome anyone who prefers daytime driving to the evening. **We meet on the second Thursday of each month at 2:00.** Our next meeting will be on **Thursday, February 13th at 2:00 pm** at Brenda Hunsberger's home. Jean Speiser will lead the discussion about ***The Calculating Stars*** by Mary Robinette Kowal. Please let Brenda (bghunsberger@comcast.net) and Peggy Staarman (peggstaar@verizon.net) know if you will attend.

Walkers Group

The group meets every Tuesday at 9:00 am at the Trestle Bridge parking lot...or officially the Brandywine Meadows Trail...off Rt. 322 near Downingtown from January thru May, and from June through December they meet at the Sugarsbridge parking lot off route 322 nearer to West Chester. They leave promptly at 9 am. Walk as fast and as far as you would like. Lots of talking & laughter! No other emails will be sent out to remind anyone...just show up and be ready to shove off at 9am on Tuesdays. They don't walk in the rain or snow...drizzle YES...snow & rain NO!

Contact: Phyllis Dunn at dunn.phyllis@gmail.com

Great Decisions 2025 Discussion Group

Global Issues affect all of our lives. The Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions Briefing Book offers a structure for foreign policy discussions on urgent and contemporary topics. We meet from **1:00-3:00 pm on the 4th Monday of the month** in West Chester at the home of member Robbe Healey. We welcome you to join in these lively and thoughtful discussions.

The eight topics in the Foreign Policy Association Great Decisions 2025 Briefing Book are:

1. American Foreign Policy at a Crossroads
2. U.S. Changing Leadership of the World Economy
3. U.S.-China Relations
4. International Cooperation on Climate Change
5. The Future of NATO and European Security
6. AI and American National Security
7. India: Between China, the West, and the Global South
8. After Gaza: American Policy in the Middle East

To learn more about the Foreign Policy Association, or to read a brief summary of the topics above, visit:

https://www.fpa.org/great_decisions/index.cfm?act=show_material&product_id=16892

Interested: Email Robbe Healey @ Robbe.Healey@gmail.com



empowering women since 1881

West Chester - Chester County Chapter
119 Llandoverly Drive, Exton, PA 19341.

February 2025 Newsletter

PA 157th District House of Representatives
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