

# **AAUWsome NEWS**

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

Volume 71 Number 1 September 2025

September Meeting: Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. Celebration of Our 65th Anniversary

Presented by: Karen Wellin, PA AAUW Membership V-P, and Donna Eaves & Beryl Goldman, AAUW West Chester - Chester County

#### **Grove Methodist Church**

Karen Wellin, PA AAUW Membership V-P, will speak on the history of AAUW; Donna Eaves will then discuss our own branch history along with shared memories from several other long term AAUW members, and Beryl Goldman will end with her vision for the year ahead.

Arrive at 6:30-7:00PM for Social Time / 7:00PM Speaker / ~7:40PM Meeting Refreshments & Setup/Cleanup: provided by Hospitality Committee

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 <a href="https://www.grovechurch.org">www.grovechurch.org</a> or 610-696-2663.

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### Letter from the Presidents

-- Beryl Goldman, Rhoda McNitt

"If you light a lamp for somebody, it will also brighten your path." – Buddha

That first day of school each year — armed with sharpened pencils, unblemished composition books, and unbent metal lunch boxes. The anticipation. Looking forward to friends not seen for a couple of months and new teachers rumored to be either really nice and friendly or mean and tough. Regardless of what was ahead, we felt, at that time, that this was a new beginning. The past was the past that could not be changed but this was an opportunity to reinvent ourselves and take on the challenges of the upcoming year.

And now, even as adults, when September rolls around, we experience similar feelings. Excited about the future with the occasional butterflies as we face the unknown. The beauty of our anticipation is that it is a shared experience among like-minded women whose collective purpose is to support women and girls achieve their individual goals and ambitions. In 2025-2026, we are challenging ourselves on two new beginnings . . . Gateway to Equity and our Educational Priority. We're thrilled to report that both of these are off to great starts with excellent leaders paving the way.

#### **LCH Health and Community Services**

in Kennett Square was overwhelmingly chosen by our members as the Gateway to Equity winner for 2025-2026. Working along with Kate Wickersham at LCH, Diane Hoffman and Marie Knox have spent a large portion of their summer addressing the needs of those served and developing a comprehensive approach for our members to be of support. Through their monthly suggestions of purchases, gift cards, and monetary donations along with hands-on volunteerism that our members can provide, we should certainly be able to make a significant impact in the lives of so many women, girls and families. We are particularly excited about the opportunities offered to us to become readers in either English,

Spanish or both so families can share in the love of books. Also, we have been asked to volunteer for their Pediatric Coat Distribution in the fall. All of this is addressed in more detail in this newsletter. What an exciting experience for all of us to make an amazing contribution to the broader community.

The other equally exciting project beginning this year is devoting time and attention to our Educational Priority. Thanks to Kate Lindsay, Marie Knox and Peggy Staarman who volunteered to lead this initiative. They have reached out to all of you for your input and, based on the responses, the specific focus will be on Head Start. Our members will spend time in the classroom, reading to children and performing other tasks together with the teachers to promote literacy. Once again, more detail is available in this newsletter (see article below) and we expect to hear more as they go forward. We look forward to rolling up our sleeves to make a difference.

Our gratitude to Jane McDowell and Jean Shervais for arranging an excellent and diverse line-up of programs for our meetings this year beginning with a **Celebration of our 65th Anniversary**. Please join us as we learn about our history and share our combined vision for the year ahead.

There are so many of you who have offered your experience and expertise in all different ways. Please, if you aren't engaged in any of our outreach programs, let us know what interests you and we'll be happy to get you involved! We can't do any of our work without you!

Here's to a new, exciting beginning!

Warmly,

Beryl & Rhoda



# Gateway to Equity Award: LCH Health and Community Services

This year's Gateway to Equity award winner is LCH Health and Community Service. LCH, based in southern Chester County, offers a wide variety of services including primary care, women's health, pediatrics, dental care, behavioral health counseling, social assistance, and educational support.

#### September: Collecting Hand Sanitizers

At the September meeting, we will be collecting travel size hand sanitizers for LCH to give out at their health screenings. Please bring what you can to the meeting or send to Diane Hoffman 204 Blue Spruce Drive, Kennett Square, PA 19348.

### October: Help with Coat Drive

LCH is also looking for five to ten volunteers to help distribute coats at their coat drive in October. The exact date will not be known until mid-September. We do not have to provide the coats, just help the children find the correct size. IMPORTANT: Because there are children involved, volunteers will need a PA criminal background check and child abuse clearances. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Marie Knox or Diane Hoffman.

For questions, please contact Marie Knox at 610-496-3078 or <u>marieknox@verizon.net</u> or Diane Hoffman at dianehoffman83@gmail.com.

### AAUW – West Chester-Chester County Priority Initiative

-- Peggy Staarman, Marie Knox, Kate Lindsay

Through surveys sent to AAUW members, we have identified the 2025-2026 Priority Initiative. Our objective is to support literacy skills by reading to a classroom and/or focusing on individual children with reading difficulties. This initiative involves working with Head Start students in either the West Chester, Coatesville, or Downingtown areas. We are seeking volunteers with energy and dedication to enhance literacy skills in children. You do not need formal education or experience, but that would strengthen our project. But you do need the following clearances to work with children:

Pennsylvania Criminal History (free for volunteers)
Child Abuse Clearance (free for volunteers)
NSOR (National Sex Offender Registry) (free)
FBI Fingerprint for individuals who have not resided in PA for 10 years (\$27 fee)
TB skin test (fee)

Opportunities will be available at all three locations if we get enough volunteers. Volunteers must decide where they would like to work, how often (I.e., one or two days a week, two days a month), and what days they are available. If you are interested in participating in this initiative, please contact Peggy Staarman (peggstaar@verizon.net), Marie Knox (marieknox@verizon.net), or Kate Lindsay (<a href="https://katelindsay1949@gmail.com">katelindsay1949@gmail.com</a>) with your answers to the preceding questions.

### **Volunteer Clearance Instructions**

Instructions for obtaining each required document is detailed below.

1. Pennsylvania Criminal History Sign on to https://epatch.pa.gov/home

Click on New Record Check Volunteers only

Check the box and press Accept

Fill in your details

Submit request

PRINT A COPY OF THE REPORT.

#### 2. Child Abuse Clearance Sign on to https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home

Click on Create Individual Account

Fill out the application and once submitted you will have to wait for a temporary password in your email to proceed. Once you have it go back to original site and click on Individual Login

Click on Access My Clearances and change password

Scroll to bottom of page and press continue.

Click on clearance application scroll to bottom and press Begin

Click on the first category which is Volunteer with child contact.

Under Volunteer Category click on OTHER and under Agency Name type in Chester County Intermediate Unit.

Continue to the next page and add information required.

You will have to add all your addresses since 1975 and everyone who is currently and who has lived with you or you have lived with since that time.

Submit and PRINT A COPY OF THE REPORT.

#### 3. Finger Prints

Start the registration process online by choosing your location at https://www.identogo.com/locations. First click on Digital Fingerprinting and on the next screen, click on the box labeled FBI History Check which will take you through the registration process.

A response from the background check is typically returned within 10 days. It will include results or a rejection notice. A rejection for poor quality prints will qualify you for a second free fingerprinting. Two (2) rejections will qualify you for a FBI name search. This process can take 2 to 6 weeks.

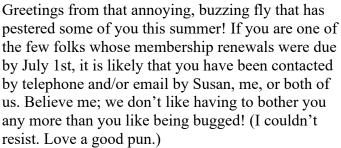
You will need driver's license and completed pre-registration ID Number from cogentid to complete the process

### **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

-- Co- VPs for Membership Susan Woron Beardsley and Karen Marshall

## Membership Progress Report

-- Karen Marshall



When I started this collection process, I was a bit intimidated. Asking people for money wasn't on my Summer Fun bingo card. However, it is vital that we keep our records current, our handbook updated, and our coffers full. To that end, thank you to everyone who has responded so kindly to our requests.

Admittedly, it's kind of thrilling getting checks in the mail! And to know our chapter is thriving.

Please permit me to give a shout out to my posse of helpers. I have little experience with formal record-





keeping; my atrophied data-collection muscles needed a workout. Luckily, everything eventually came together, thanks to the incredible support from my personal Fantastic Four: my partner-in-crime, Susan Woron, along with experienced back-up from Jane Shultz, Anne Anderko, and Trish Alfano. Did I mention that Susan feeds me pastries?

Because of their tireless assistance, I am getting more efficient at creating spreadsheets, leaving detailed voicemails, and updating records. Back in June, I started off having to contact 20 members.

Unfortunately, there were a few teeny glitches along the way, but at this time I am delighted to report that we only have one renewal pending. Frankly, summer is a busy time. People are vacationing, babysitting, caring for spouses, and even undergoing surgeries. I understand; believe me. No judgment.

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If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining, please contact me. I would be happy to send them the current application forms. Perhaps we need to incentivize sending in memberships renewals on time. Maybe doughnuts?

### Membership Numbers Update

Here's an update on what's been happening to our membership numbers since we last met. We have 5 members who have opted not to renew, but we believe this is due to normal attrition, not dissatisfaction with our organization. They will be missed. On a happier note, over the summer we have added two members and are on track to add several more. Pamela Hudson of Immaculata University has graciously accepted our free membership! At this time, our roster shows 89 members. This has been updated to include those members who have not renewed, our new members, and our pending renewals. This number is very fluid, of course. We really appreciate all the referrals and friends that you have recruited for us. This encourages us and motivates us to work even harder for our

organization. Let's keep up the good work and top 100 members this year!

Believe it or not, we have doubled our member numbers from Hershey's Mill from 9 members to 18 members this past year. We expect to have another prospecting event there in December and see if we can encourage even more women to join us. We have been following up and recruiting new members over the summer. Please see our New Members section to meet who has joined. We have been offering our three free memberships to people in organizations we work with. As indicated, we have had one acceptance at this time. We'll have an update as to how that is going at the September meeting.

## Recruiting...Building the Membership Base

We are reaching out to our members for possible PMP's later this year and into 2026. If any of our current members would *like to host a PMP* and invite your neighbors and friends, we will provide the presentation and marketing materials. Please contact either Susan Woron, <a href="sworon54@gmail.com">sworon54@gmail.com</a> or Karen Marshall, <a href="karenrory@comcast.net">karenrory@comcast.net</a>, for more information. We also appreciate the *guests you bring to meetings and events*, and we will follow up with them to see if we can convince them to join our organization. We thank you for your continued support helping to build our membership.

# AAUW Prospective Members Party December 3

We are excited to host our first Prospective Members Party (PMP) for this year on December 3rd from 7:00-8:30 at the Sullivan House at Hershey's Mill. We currently have eighteen members who live in the Hershey's Mill community, and we are hoping to expand those numbers and secure additional members from this neighborhood. Several of our current members will also join this PMP to aid in describing the benefits of membership in AAUW. I have updated our PowerPoint presentation with new photos which helps the audience to visualize AAUW activities and members in real situations that will make an impact on them. We hope to have a second Prospective Members party in the spring, possibly at Greystone. If anyone has a suggestion, or would like to host a party, please volunteer. Thanks to everyone who has sent in recent photos to update our marketing materials!

### Watch this space for the Chatterbox

-- Karen Marshall

As some of you may know, I have never met a stranger. Recently, I made a new friend while chatting in line at the Post Office, and she and I have already been out to lunch together. Just today, I met an amazing woman who asked for my address in order to send me her children's book about her

husband: a very tall, former Swedish guard at the Vatican! She gave me a big hug when we parted.

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### **Chatterbox (Continued)**

I would like to channel my insatiable appetite for making personal connections into a survey-style, emailed monthly questionnaire: a get-to-know-you. I will send out questions prior to the publication of each newsletter. You may email or text your responses to me. If I have enough members submitting stories, I will format the answers and submit the results to Toni Gorkin for publication. Please don't consider these quizzes as homework. Participation is entirely optional.

In the past, I have posed questions to my preschool students, a la *Kids Say the Darnedest Things*. (Yes, I am that old.) Their responses were often relatable and always endearing. For example, one year at Thanksgiving, I asked the typical "What are you thankful for?" question. An adorable wee one answered that she was thankful that there was God inside of her. Another preschooler said that she was grateful for her mom and dad. And one charmer? "Pringles."

### Welcome to our New Members

### **Helen Holly Alden**



We would like to welcome Holly Alden. She joined in June and here is some information about her.

My name is Helen Holly Alden, but please call me Holly. I use Helen for business. I was born in Bucks County, PA near Doylestown

and I lived in the country raising chickens and sheep for 4H. Lots of work and fun. I went to Quaker schools from K -12. My religious journey has been Quaker, and then I went from Atheist to Unitarian, which I have practiced for over 50 years. I participate in advocacy programs at my church, which range from climate, women's rights, LGBTQ+, and racial equality. I'm also on the membership team at my church.

I graduated from the University of Maryland in College Park, MD in 1971. I majored in health with a minor in exercise physiology. I played field hockey, basketball, and lacrosse while there. I made the US Women's Lacrosse Team in 1970. I made the US Women's Field Hockey Team in 1971 and then

devoted my time to hockey for the next 3 years. I taught health and physical education for two years at Georgetown Visitation School for Girls.

I moved back to PA where I did various jobs including Villanova Law School Library and was a lab tech for the University of PA Department of Biological Research. I decided to go into the business of property management and real estate rentals in 1982. In 1991, I started my own company, Alere Management Company, and after running this business for over 40 years, I retired in 2024.

I spend my time with activities at my church, Main Line Unitarian Church. In addition to the advocacy I mentioned above, I run the Women's Monthly "Lunch and Lecture" September through May for my church community. I love nature, learning, community development, movies, and music. I take occasional classes at Villanova.

I'm drawn to AAUW because of your large array of opportunities that help others and nurture the AAUW community. I'm an advocate for building community that facilitates connections and provides places for sharing and learning from each other.

### **Leslie Pepitone**



I first heard about AAUW from my mom when- I was very young. She was a professor at Bryn Mawr College, an esteemed scholar at a time when few women could so successfully advance in their careers. She was my

first--and most loved !--role model. I remember her mentioning AAUW as a very supportive group for professional women. So many years later, I'm glad to have joined myself! I'm a just-retired Psychologist, having had a thriving private practice for more than thirty years. I did mostly long-term, psychodynamic psychotherapy with adults, and supervised many (CONTINUED on next page)

### **Leslie Pepitone (Continued)**

therapists. I found all of it very meaningful. I also taught for several years at Hahnemann University in the Department of Mental Health Sciences, and liked contributing to the profession in that way, too. I stopped teaching when my daughter was in grade school; I didn't want to miss any more Halloween parades!

My daughter is an attorney practicing in DC. She went to Penn Law, so I used to see her more

frequently than I do now. It's an adjustment! Without as much time together, and without my practice, I'm volunteering more at Community Volunteers in Medicine (CVIM), where I've been a supervisor in the Behavioral Health Department for many years. I also have more time for trips to Europe, walking in nature, reading, going to museums, and taking some classes. My political activism, born of the 1970's, is also alive and well!

I look forward to getting to know many of you.

## Mimi Jones Scholarship

-- Suzy DeGeorge



The Mimi Jones Scholarship has been awarded by our affiliate for the first time to **Hallie Zimmermann** in the amount of \$2,390.25. Due to the Stock Market doing so well, we were able to increase Hallie's scholarship total with some additional

monies from Alice Lawson to \$3775!

Hallie is a student in the Nursing program at Immaculata University. She plans to graduate in May of 2026. Hallie feels that nursing is not just a career but a calling!

After spending time in the Peace Corps in Cameroon, Hallie worked with adults with disabilities and individuals with mental health concerns. All these experiences have had a dramatic impact on her career choice of helping others. She is especially drawn to the health challenges and cultural sensitivity of individuals in underserved communities.

In her letter of recommendation, her professor highly praised her academic abilities, curiosity and the help she provides classmates. Hallie is in the accelerated Bachelor of Science in nursing degree program and maintains a 4.0 GPA. The scholarship committee felt Hallie was an ideal candidate for this scholarship.

# **Community Warehouse Project**

-- Anne Anderko-chair

In July and August, some of our members volunteered at the Community Warehouse Project to help with a special project of sorting and repacking holiday items to be distributed in November to needy families. Members Lee Dibble, Robin Paragone, Sandy Claus and Karen Marshall lent a hand and learned what Christmas in July and August looks like. This past year the warehouse has compiled some amazing stats. They have served 546 households, provided 700 new beds, served 1,391 individuals, served 649 children, served 124 veterans and worked with 104 partner agencies. Thanks to all of the volunteers from this past season who gave of their time to help the warehouse work towards their mission of transforming lives by helping those in need.

We will continue our monthly volunteer program starting in September; however, the day may change each month depending upon the needs of the warehouse but timing will still be 10:00 to 12:00 weekdays. If you would like to volunteer, please e-mail Anne Anderko your name and days that would normally work for you to <a href="mailto:ananderko@msn.com">ananderko@msn.com</a> and I will contact you as needed.

#### Warehouse Project (Continued)

Lastly, with the September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting quickly approaching, please remember to bring any items that you wish to donate to the warehouse to the meeting and Anne will be happy to drop them off. Thank you for your continued support of this worthy cause.





Left: Robin Paragone and Lee Dibble; Right: Karen Marshall and Sandy Claus

# Laundromat Library League

-- Peggy Staarman

The Laundromat Library League (LLL) received about 500 books from Pickering Valley Elementary School's third graders. The third-grade teachers organized another book drive at the end of the school year. The students not only collected books, but they also made bookmarks to accompany the books. During the summer, the Uwchlan Hills librarian and literacy specialist also donated about 1000 books to the LLL. With 280 nationwide locations and our three sites in Guam, the demand for books is constant. We are so grateful for the book donations by our schools, libraries, businesses, community organizations, and individual donors. We do need more board books for our youngest "readers" and books in Spanish. Please contact Peggy Staarman (peggstaar@verizon.net) who will be happy to receive or collect these two kinds of books. Thank you so much.

# West Chester Food Cupboard

-- Jean Shervais

AAUW has been volunteering at the West Chester Food Cupboard for several years. On the last Monday of the month at 7 p.m., we meet for an hour to complete tasks that have not been done by the day volunteers. These can include stocking shelves, checking for expired dates, and repackaging smaller amounts of larger items. Any AAUW member who is interested in volunteering should contact Jean Shervais at <a href="mailto:jshervais@verizon.net">jshervais@verizon.net</a>. The Food Cupboard is located at 431 S. Bolmar Street in West Chester.

### **AAUW Mission Statement:**

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. Our Chapter – 2025-2026:

Toni Gorkin Newsletter Editor 484-868-1872 tgorkin@gmail.com Newsletter email tgorkin@gmail.com Bervl Goldman Branch Co-President 610-742-6415 berdav@verizon.net Rhoda McNitt\* **Branch Co-President** 610-213-0713 rhodamcnitt@verizon.net Jane McDowell\* Co-Vice President for Program 610-574-3463 ilwmcdowell@gmail.com Co-Vice President for Program Jean Shervais 610-431-9066 jshervais@verizon.net Susan Woron Membership Co-Vice President 484-467-6705 sworon54@gmail.com Karen Marshall\* Membership Co-Vice President 610-316-9325 karenrory@comcast.net Chris Smith Recording Secretary CmcSmith1972@gmail.com 856-217-7171 Steph Mitman\* Corresponding Secretary 610-883-2774 ntcwoman@gmail.com Jane Schultz Financial Officer 484-467-6835 mjschultz46@gmail.com Branch Website wccc-pa.aauw.net \*newly elected

#### Social Media

Sandy Alexander has created a QR code to help you access the branch's Facebook page. Share it to help access the page more easily! Be sure to send pictures and information to Sandy to fb4aauw@gmail.com. Remember to copy Toni



Gorkin at tgorkin@gmail.com for the newsletter and Rhoda McNitt at rhodamcnitt@verizon.net for the web page.

### **Board Meeting**

Board Meetings are 6:30 – 8:30 PM, first WEDNESDAY of the Month [unless otherwise noted in the Handbook].

The Board Meetings are **held at Grove United Methodist Church** or via ZOOM [as <u>noted in the</u> Handbook].

The September Board Meeting will be on September 3.

#### Newsletter

The newsletter is published by the first of each month. The deadline for submissions is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month to ensure the issue can be distributed on the first of the next month. Please send emails to tgorkin@gmail.com.



# **Special Interest Groups**



### Mah Jongg

MahJongg will resume on September 4th. 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.

For more information contact Kim Glavin at <u>484</u> 354-9681.

### 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, <a href="deaves@live.com">deaves@live.com</a>, to be added to the mailing list.

### **TIG (Travel Interest Group)**

Contact Mary Marco at <a href="mary.m.marco@gmail.com">mary.m.marco@gmail.com</a> or Jane McDowell at <a href="Jlwmcdowell@gmail.com">Jlwmcdowell@gmail.com</a>.

### **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: Contact: Janet Kane 610-742-5961 ifentonkane@gmail.com

We will be meeting on Monday, September 15 at 1:00 at the home of Sandy Alexander to discuss *Wild Dark Shore*, by Charlotte McConaghy. Sandy Harrelson will lead the discussion.

# **LIT II: Literature Fiction & Nonfiction Book Group**

Our September meeting will be on Monday, September 8 at 2:00 pm at the home of Phyllis Dunn. Lyn Eaton will lead the discussion about *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Please let Phyllis (dunn.phyllis@gmail.com) 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 <u>dunn.phyllis@gmail.com</u>.



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

September 2025 Newsletter History of WC-CC AAUW Chapter 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