



**American Association of University Women**

## **AAUWsome NEWS**

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

**Volume 71 Number 5**  
**January 2026**



**January Meeting:**  
**Wednesday, January 14th, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom Meeting**

**Ann's Heart**  
**Presented by Kristen McGee,**  
**Executive Director of Ann's Heart**

*Ann's Heart is an organization which provides resources and assistance for the homeless. Kristen McGee will speak on her experiences working with this organization.*

*"In 2014, the decision to open the doors of the vacant Sacred Heart School to the community ignited the spark that led to the creation of Ann's Heart. Guided by the mantra "Do good and don't lose too much money," we crafted a mission that would carry us forward: to provide a place of welcome and human services to all Phoenixville area people. From establishing a collaborative hub at the HEART that houses multiple non-profits to creating CERAH, an emergency shelter for the most vulnerable in our community, we have transformed spaces with the aim of fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone."*

|   |          |  |            |   |          |
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## **Letter from the Presidents**

-- Beryl Goldman, Rhoda McNitt

*I think mentors are important and I don't think anybody makes it in the world without some form of mentorship. Nobody makes it alone. Nobody has made it alone. And we are all mentors to people even when we don't know it — Oprah Winfrey*

Before I begin my message, let me put forth a disclaimer. This first paragraph came to me (Beryl) in a letter from a beautiful young woman, my granddaughter, a recent college graduate.

“I am so grateful to have you as my grandmother. The lessons that you teach me are so extremely valuable, and you are such an admirable and inspirational woman. I love when I get to talk about you, and I aspire to be like you. The strength and resilience you have are unmatched. I could not become who I am without you, and you inspire me to do better every single day and to hold high expectations in every area of my life. I adore you and thank you for being so amazing...”

I share this with you, 1) because I wanted to brag, and 2) it raises the importance of role modeling and mentoring of the next generations. As Oprah suggests, we are often unaware of the impact we are making, but we need to realize that we are being watched and often mirrored by the young women in our lives. Whether they are our grandchildren, our nieces, or young women we interact with at the grocery store, the Y, or Costco, our opportunities to mentor go well beyond our intentions. Often, when I’m in a line at the grocery store, I watch the interaction between the young cashier and the

customer in front of me. It’s interesting to see how easily some converse with customers, especially during more challenging exchanges, and how others become quite flustered and unable to calmly respond. Or, how easily do young women enter into conversations in social settings, do they make eye contact? As you observe, can you see yourself reflected in how they behave? Do you find that they hold their own when debating issues of importance to them or do they back down to avoid conflict? I wonder who their mentors are.

You may be wondering why I raise the issue of mentoring at this time. It’s because January is National Mentoring Month (who knew?), a month to promote and celebrate the positive impact of mentorship and raise awareness to its importance. Our members, through all of our initiatives, mentor each and every day, either intentionally or just naturally. This is a wonderful way to “give” without spending any money. It’s a way of sharing what is truly important in life, a bigger picture that cannot be seen or envisioned by a younger person.

In Hebrew, a term that implies the act of mentoring is L’Dor V’Dor...from generation to generation. Our responsibility is to pass down culture and knowledge to younger generations of women and girls. Let’s embrace all opportunities for mentorship to mold those aspiring to become capable and caring adults.

Warmly, Beryl & Rhoda

### **Looking Ahead: Annual AAUW Brunch!!**

-- Brenda Hunsberger

Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 14 as the date for the annual AAUW brunch. Brunch will begin at 10 a.m. and will be held at Grove Methodist Church located at 490 Boot Road. Please bring a brunch food item to share. More information on the program and a request for RSVP's will be in the February newsletter. Hope to see you there!

## ***Holiday Party: Warm Conversations and Tasty Food***

*Affiliate members, spouses, and guests gathered at Ellerslie at Crosslands to enjoy warm, leisurely conversation, a scrumptious bounty of appetizers and desserts, and a glass or two of wine on December 7. It was a splendid way to start off the holiday season.*





## **LCH Health and Community Services**

-- *Marie Knox and Diane Hoffman*

Janet Kane reports:

I recently received a copy of the Annual Report from LCH, our

Gateway to Equity awardee this year. The facts below show how much vital support LCH provides for the surrounding community. Below is a quote from Ronan Gannon, Chief Executive Officer, LCH.

**“In southern Chester County more than 8,500 neighbors turned to LCH this year. Nearly half had no insurance, yet they still received compassionate, high-quality care.... In 2025, we cared for **1,325 patients with diabetes, 1,536 with hypertension and more than 1,100 seeking mental health support.**”**

Additionally, LCH expanded their services with an on-site pharmacy, bilingual dental services, chiropractic services, and full primary care in West Grove.

As you can see, LCH is truly meeting their mission to support the Hispanic community in southern Chester County. Our support of the organization is deeply appreciated, and AAUW-West Chester was acknowledged for Gifts in Kind in the Annual Report.

A special thank you to our members who have been making contributions to LCH over the past few months. Also, a very special thank you to Dianne Hoffman and Marie Knox for their leadership in coordinating the donations.

## **Community Warehouse Project**

Anne Anderko-chair

On a frigid December 16<sup>th</sup> morning, Karen Korbonits and Steph Mitman volunteered at the Community Warehouse Project. They unpacked countless bags filled with linens and through careful measuring determined where all of the donations should be redistributed to families in need. We made quite a dent in the avalanche of linens we needed to conquer. Please contact Anne Anderko if you would like to volunteer. The day may change each month depending upon the needs of the warehouse, but timing will still be 10:00 to 12:00 weekdays. Also, when you are cleaning up after the holiday, please remember that we take donated holiday items. If you have items, you can drop them off at the warehouse from 8:00 to 1:00, Monday through Friday or contact Anne at [ananderko@msn.com](mailto:ananderko@msn.com) if you have any questions.



*Karen Korbonits and Steph Mitman sort the avalanche of linens at the Community Warehouse*

## **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

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

Thank you to all members who have turned in their renewal forms and fees for November. We would love to head into the holidays with our November and December roster up-to-date, so please keep those dues coming. We promise we don't keep a Naughty List, but we do appreciate not having to clog up your inbox with requests! We are all getting used to this year-round renewal process. It's easy to forget during which month you initially joined our affiliate. If you need this information or if you have misplaced your forms, please email Karen at [karenrory@comcast.net](mailto:karenrory@comcast.net).

As always, you may mail your documents and checks to the following address:

Karen Marshall  
920 Shiloh Road  
West Chester, PA 19382

Alternatively, you may always renew online on the National site.

Questions? Feel free to call Karen: 610-316-9325.

### **New Member Mary Kay Hagerty**

At this time, we would like to welcome our newest Shape the Future member, Mary Kay Hagerty. Mary Kay attended our Prospective Member Party, and we had the chance to chat a bit with her.

Mary has provided the following autobiography:

I was born in Toledo Ohio and graduated Cum Laude from the University of Toledo with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education with a Minor in Art. I went on to get a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education from the College of New

Rochelle in New York where I was a Graduate Assistant. I have always loved working with children, serving as a Director and Teacher of two Preschool programs and then "moved up" to become a Kindergarten teacher for the Archdiocese of New York. I have three children and six grandchildren and live with my husband John in Hershey's Mill.



## **Laundromat Library League (LLL)**

-- *Peggy Staarman*

Bill Rettew, a staff writer for the Daily Local News will interview Peggy Staarman and Mame Purce, board members of the Laundromat Library League, at the Family Laundromat in West Chester. He will receive information about the volunteer structure of the organization as well as the success it has been able to achieve. Look for the article after January 15th! The LLL is very pleased to share any information that will persuade others to become volunteers, stewards of LLL laundromats, or donors so that we can serve our mission to give free books to children who may have few or no books in their homes.

## Member News and Notes

### The Chatterbox

-- Karen Marshall ([karenrory@comcast.net](mailto:karenrory@comcast.net))

For this month's issue, our prompt was seasonal. As always, thank you to everyone who responded to January's question. I get very excited when I find your contributions in my inbox!



#### **JANUARY CHATTERBOX SURVEY QUESTIONS/WRITING PROMPTS:**

Describe a time you were affected by bad (or good) weather. This could be a travel story, a school cancellation story, a story of fun in the snow, etc.

#### **\*\*Katharine Philipps**

I went to Colby College in Maine. Freshman year I lived on the top of the hill, but my job was in a dormitory part way down the hill. Left my dorm one morning and realized I was in a blizzard and could not see which way to walk. Returned to my dorm, picked up Jody Perry (Admiral Perry's granddaughter), and together we arrived in time to serve breakfast.

#### **\*\*Randi Shellenbarger**

It was the winter of 1995-1996. We had just moved to West Chester in February 1995. We made a visit back to our former home in New Jersey one weekend in January of 1996. We were planning to stay for church as it started to flurry. The TV was on and the weather was calling for heavy snow up the eastern coast. I called our neighbor here in West Chester, who said that we had 3-4 inches already. Facing a 100 mile trip, we got into the car and down I-287 we went. We got on the PA Turnpike and the snow was getting deeper and deeper. We pushed on down RT 202, exiting at Westtown Rd. As soon as we made a left at the light we heard that they had shut down the turnpike. S. Concord was scary with deep snow and the need to go up the hill into our development. We pushed snow the whole way up the small hill and down Amelia drive to our drive covered in deep snow. Gladly, we made it home and it was the beginning of a week that school was closed. The snow on the streets was so deep (about 30 inches) and the only clear places were every driveway on Amelia Drive, as neighbors got together to dig each other out. What a winter!

#### **\*\*Elaine Burgess**

#### **SNOW DAYS**

With over 65 years in school settings--as a student, teacher or parent or grandparent of students, I can definitely say that nothing could get my attention more quickly than the prospect of a "snow day". Just a mention of snow in a weather report or the appearance of first flakes and my heart would jump at the prospect of a "snow day". Although snow never changed, official notification came in different ways over the years--first by radio, then by phone--maybe as part of a phone chain to pass on the message and more recently by robocalls and texts. In any case, the message was the same. We had a change in schedule, an unexpected day off from the routine and chance to go back to sleep and stay at home. It was a day to savor!

One such snow day many years ago, conveniently occurred in December. My husband, who was also a teacher, had a "snow day" too. We were new to teaching, new to Chester County and newly married. We spent the "snow day" baking Christmas cookies. Those were the most delicious cookies, better than any others we have baked since then! Many years have passed since then, and I have now enjoyed many years of retirement. Still the unexplainable power and magic of a "snow day" remains. Whenever it begins to snow, I check the TV or now my phone for updates on who is having a "snow day!" (CONTINUED on next page)

## CHATTERBOX (Continued)

\*\*Karen Marshall

I have the usual nightmare stories about spinning out on a frozen bridge while driving into DC from MD for my teaching job. And of course there was the time my husband and I made the dubious decision to allow our then 3-year-old to hold our baby daughter on his lap while the two careened down a sledding hill on an innertube. But, for the purpose of this prompt, I would rather stick to a less frightening memory. I recall when our family friends got stranded at our house in MD during a terrible snowstorm, and they couldn't leave to go back to their home in VA. We spent the most marvelous week in their company. Together we cooked, watched movies, listened to albums, and played word games from the comics' section of the *Washington Post*. I became quite accomplished at solving the Junior Jumble. What a coup to have been cozy and warm and satiated. I don't take my good fortune for granted.

\*\*Rhoda McNitt

This is how I remember it. In 1977 or 78, when I was a single parent with a 6- or 7-year-

old son, we were preparing to visit my parents for a Thanksgiving family gathering. It was the day before. I worked half a day, watching the snow fall lightly. I was concerned, but I packed the car and off we went. We were living in an apartment complex in West Chester and needed to reach the turnpike. The first route I tried was already blocked, so I drove to Downingtown and started up Rt. 113. Multiple cars were stalled along that steep route, spinning tires. In our "boat" of an old Plymouth Fury, we drove past with no trouble, but common sense (something I'm not known for) kicked in, and I realized the trip might not be a good idea. We headed for home. I called Mom and Dad and shed some tears. We learned the next day that the turnpike had been closed for several hours; we would have been stranded. The best part of the story? A neighbor couple with a young son about Michael's age invited us to share their Thanksgiving dinner. We didn't know them well, but we were grateful for their generous offer and accepted. Dinner was delicious. We had a delightful time, and the boys had fun playing together in the snow. A disaster was averted and a holiday redeemed.

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

Toni Gorkin  
484-868-1872  
Newsletter email

Newsletter Editor  
[tgorkin@gmail.com](mailto:tgorkin@gmail.com)  
[tgorkin@gmail.com](mailto:tgorkin@gmail.com)

Beryl Goldman  
610-742-6415

Branch Co-President  
[berday@verizon.net](mailto:berday@verizon.net)

Rhoda McNitt\*  
610-213-0713

Branch Co-President  
[rhodamcnitt@verizon.net](mailto:rhodamcnitt@verizon.net)

Jane McDowell\*  
610-574-3463

Co-Vice President for Program  
[jlwmcdowell@gmail.com](mailto:jlwmcdowell@gmail.com)

Jean Shervais  
610-431-9066

Co-Vice President for Program  
[jshervais@verizon.net](mailto:jshervais@verizon.net)

Susan Woron

Membership Co-Vice President

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 484-467-6705                  | <a href="mailto:sworon54@gmail.com">sworon54@gmail.com</a>                                       |
| Karen Marshall*               | Membership Co-Vice President<br><a href="mailto:karenrory@comcast.net">karenrory@comcast.net</a> |
| Chris Smith<br>856-217-7171   | Recording Secretary<br><a href="mailto:CmcSmith1972@gmail.com">CmcSmith1972@gmail.com</a>        |
| Steph Mitman*<br>610-883-2774 | Corresponding Secretary<br><a href="mailto:ntcwoman@gmail.com">ntcwoman@gmail.com</a>            |
| Jane Schultz<br>484-467-6835  | Financial Officer<br><a href="mailto:mjschultz46@gmail.com">mjschultz46@gmail.com</a>            |
| Branch Website                | <a href="http://wccc-pa.aauw.net">wccc-pa.aauw.net</a>   |
| *newly elected                |  |

## 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](mailto:tgorkin@gmail.com).

## 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

[fb4aaauw@gmail.com](mailto:fb4aaauw@gmail.com). Remember to copy Toni Gorkin at [tgorkin@gmail.com](mailto:tgorkin@gmail.com) for the newsletter and Rhoda McNitt at [rhodamcnitt@verizon.net](mailto:rhodamcnitt@verizon.net) for the web page.



## Board Meetings

Board Meetings are **6:30 – 8:30 PM, first WEDNESDAY of the Month.**

The JANUARY Board Meeting will be a ZOOM meeting on January 7, 2026.

## Finance Officer's Report

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Beginning Checking Account Balance</b><br><i>July 1, 2025</i>   | \$ 8,245.46   |
| <b>Ending Checking Account Balance</b><br><i>November 30, 2025</i>   | \$7,489.25  |
| <b>Mimi Jones Scholarship Fund</b><br><i>(Dedicated line item within the checking account)</i>                   | \$ 1,297.00   |
| <b>Harriet Jarosh Environmental Education Fund</b><br><i>(Dedicated line item within the checking account)</i>   | \$ 100.00   |
| <b>Vanguard Account</b><br><i>November 30, 2025</i><br><i>(Harriet Jarosh Environmental Education Fund)</i>      | \$17,990.76   |
| <b>Chester County Community Foundation</b><br><i>November 30, 2025</i><br><i>(Alice Lawson Scholarship Fund)</i> | \$312,622.95  |
|  | <b>YTD</b><br><b>July 1, 2025 – November 30, 2025</b> |
| <b>TOTAL Income</b>  | \$9,555.00  |
| <b>TOTAL Disbursements</b>   | \$10,311.21   |
| <b>NET GAIN (LOSS)</b>   | <b>\$765.21</b>                                       |



## Special Interest Groups



### **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. For more information contact Kim Glavin at [484 354-9681](mailto:484354-9681).

### **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, [deaves@live.com](mailto:deaves@live.com), to be added to the mailing list.

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

Contact Mary Marco at [mary.m.marco@gmail.com](mailto:mary.m.marco@gmail.com) or Jane McDowell at [Jlwmcdowell@gmail.com](mailto:Jlwmcdowell@gmail.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 two book discussion groups.*

### **LIT I: Daytime Literature Group**

Fiction & Nonfiction Lit I Book Group:

Contact: Janet Kane 610-742-5961 - [jfentonkane@gmail.com](mailto:jfentonkane@gmail.com)

We are changing the order of our books for 2026. On JANUARY 19th we will discuss *The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife* by Anna Johnson. Sandy Alexander will lead the discussion and we will meet at the home of Kay Philipps.

On FEBRUARY 16th we will discuss *Circe* by Madeleine Miller, and Brenda Hunsberger will lead the discussion at the home of Jean Shervais.

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

Our January meeting will be on **Monday, January 12th at 2:00 pm** at the home of Carol Zabriskie. Peggy Staarman will lead the discussion about *The Better Sister* by Alafair Burke. Please let Carol (no-way@verizon.net) and Peggy (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](mailto:dunn.phyllis@gmail.com).



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

*January 2026 Newsletter*

Ann's Heart

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.

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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](http://www.aauw.org) [www.aauwpa.org](http://www.aauwpa.org) [wccc-pa.aauw.net](http://wccc-pa.aauw.net)