

FEBRUARY BRANCH MEETING

Monday, February 23, 2026

2:00 pm on Zoom

“Unmasking Implicit Bias”

Presented by Edwinna Sessions

This conversation offers an opportunity to learn how to reveal our unconscious thoughts by uncovering the ways they shape our behaviors.

Presidents' Message

Dear members and friends,

Celebrating Black History Month we would like to introduce two trailblazers in science: Rebecca Lee Crumpler and Gladys Mae West. They are two remarkable women whose groundbreaking achievements changed the fields of medicine and technology. Their perseverance and intellect helped pave the way for future generations.

Rebecca Lee Crumpler: Medical Trailblazer (1831-1895)



Born in 1831, Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler was inspired by her aunt's dedication to caring for the sick. Despite the barriers facing African Americans and women, she became the first African American woman in the United States to earn a medical degree, graduating from the New England Female

Medical College in 1864. After the Civil War, she worked in Richmond, Virginia, caring for newly freed African Americans through the Freedmen's Bureau, mostly serving poor women and children. In 1883, she published "A Book of Medical Discourses," one of the earliest medical texts by an African American, focusing on women's and children's health. The Rebecca Lee Pre-health Society encourages students to enter health careers. This society, named for Dr. Crumpler, is still operational at Syracuse University. You can visit her Beacon Hill home which is now a stop on the Boston Women's Heritage Trail.

For more on Dr. Crumpler see:

<https://www.civilwarmed.org/rebecca-lee-crumpler/>

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/rebecca-lee-crumpler>

Gladys Mae West: Mapping Our World (1930 – 2026)



Gladys Mae West, one of history's "hidden figures" and the Mother of GPS, was born in 1930 in Virginia and showed an early talent in mathematics. Graduating valedictorian from high school, her high school teachers strongly encouraged her to major in mathematics. Without their encouragement, West has said that left to her own devices, she would have majored in home economics. She earned a full-ride scholarship to Virginia State.

She earned degrees at Virginia State College and,

beginning in 1956, worked as a mathematician and programmer at the U.S. Naval Weapons Laboratory. West contributed essential research to satellite geodesy and played a pivotal role in developing the mathematical models that became the foundation for GPS technology—the navigation system used around the world today. Despite suffering a serious stroke, West went on to earn a Ph.D at age 70 from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. In 2018, her achievements were honored with induction into the U.S. Air Force Hall of Fame.

Legacy

Crumpler and West’s dedication and achievements broke barriers and inspired future scientists, engineers, and doctors. Their stories are enduring reminders of the importance of resilience, diversity, and determination in shaping society’s progress.

Watch an interview on GPS with West:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8g10SxP8EwM>
More information on Gladys West can be found here;
<https://www.airforcetimes.com/veterans/military-history/2026/01/21/hidden-figure-gladys-west-gps-pioneer-and-navy-civilian-dies-at-95/>

Best wishes for a healthy February,
Heather & Peggy
Heather Balczarek & Peggy James, Co-Presidents

Heather Balczarek
Peggy James

SAVE THE DATE

Interbranch Meeting

March 12

1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Monmouth County Library Headquarters
125 Symmes Drive
Manalapan, Nj

This year’s Interbranch meeting is hosted by the Freehold Branch of AAUW. Linda Kenyon, will present her one-woman show, “A Life of My Own: Meeting Eleanor Roosevelt.” Eleanor was an AAUW member, as is the actor, Linda Kenyon.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership Is Everyone’s Responsibility

By now you should have received your pink Yearbook by mail, in person, or dropped off at your home. Please check it over for any errors. Use the last 3 blank pages for notes and member updates from Networks. There is an email version of the branch roster that was sent out in December. If you would like one, please let us know. We had a successful Meet and Mingle on January 11 with quite a few new people attending. Many thanks to the Board Members for presenting their areas of expertise.

New Addresses and Email:

Sue Monroe

- phone and email the same

Madeline Fedak

New Email:

Lauren Nicosia

New Member:

Sandra Del Monaco,

Olivia Martel,

PUBLIC POLICY NEWS AND RESOURCES

College: Villanova University
Profession: Author of *How to Fly*,
events/marketing
Interests: reading, biking, beach

Co-Membership Directors:
Mary Lea Burden
Judy Kramer



Our annual scholarship luncheon is scheduled for noon on Wednesday, April 29, at Beacon Hill Country Club, Atlantic Highlands. The committee is currently contacting a speaker and confirming honorees for the Women of Achievement awards. If you know of any businesses, restaurants, or stores who might contribute a gift card or item(s) for our raffle baskets, contact Lauren Nicosia, lauren.nicosia74@gmail.com before soliciting. We do not want a duplication of effort. As soon as plans are finalized, Alice MacPhee Jesmajian will design the flyer. She has agreed to again serve as registration chair to be sure that you are seated with friends and receive the entree that you choose. We look forward to another gorgeous day at Beacon Hill. Tell your friends to mark their calendars. Thanks,
Kathy Olsen and Margaret Graf,
Development Directors

AAUW Webinar: Thursday, January 29, 3-4:30 pm **“Advocacy in an Election Year: Staying Nonpartisan While Taking Real Action”**

AAUW’s strength comes from our nonpartisan, issues-first approach to advancing equity. As we look to the 2026 midterm elections, it’s critical to make our voices heard.

Wondering how to speak out while staying nonpartisan? Join to hear from experts from the Alliance for Justice and leave empowered with the tools to engage in nonpartisan advocacy and stand up for AAUW values. In this session, you will learn how to:

- Engage in advocacy during an election year while staying squarely within nonpartisan guidelines.
- Plan and carry out voter education and registration efforts that align with AAUW’s mission.
- Support or oppose ballot measures appropriately in ways that are values-driven and nonpartisan.

Register here: [Advocacy in an Election Year: Staying Nonpartisan While Taking Real Action](#)

The Future of Higher Education

This **webinar** took place on January 15. If you missed it, the recording is available [here](#). As you reflect on this important discussion, you are invited to take action and stand up for equity. Here are some ways to make a difference:

- Share — Lift up insights and ideas via social media.
- Act — Visit aauw.org/act to contact your elected officials and protect inclusive learning.
- Give — Support AAUW’s fight on behalf of women on campuses across the country by giving to the Defend Higher Ed Fund and the Public Policy Fund. [Donate here.](#)

Tell Congress to Defend Education Funding

In November, the U.S. Department of Education announced it's moving the day-to-day functions of key K-12 and higher ed programs to other agencies. Call on Congress to conduct oversight of the Department of Education and include guardrails in the FY26 appropriations bill that block these unlawful transfers and ensure all appropriated funds go to the agencies – and communities – they're meant to serve.

Only Congress can eliminate or restructure the Department of Education. Interagency shifts don't cut bureaucracy: they create confusion for states and schools, weaken protections for students (especially students with disabilities), and undermine equal educational opportunity.

[Urge Congress to protect the Department of Education's mission and ensure the Department administers the programs and funds it's required to under law.](#)

AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell looks at the year ahead:

“Rather than making resolutions, we are leaning into year two of our strategic plan with clarity and resolve. Together, we are advancing gender equity by expanding access to higher education, strengthening pathways to economic security, and championing inclusive workplaces and campuses where women and girls can thrive. From funding women's education and research to growing a powerful network of advocates nationwide, our work this year is about turning values into impact. We also know the current moment demands vigilance. In early 2026, critical federal decisions will shape student loan access, workforce training, civil rights enforcement, and the future of the Department of Education. AAUW is meeting this moment head-on — mobilizing our members during public comment periods, defending civil rights protections, and calling on Congress to provide strong oversight and guardrails. Leadership in challenging times requires courage, community, and grace. As Maya Angelou said, *“I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it.”* That resilience — and

the generosity that sustains it — will guide us forward.

Here's to a year of shared purpose, bold advocacy, and lasting impact!”

Virtual Economic Empowerment Trainings

AAUW's virtual webinar series offers expert-led training in salary negotiation, financial literacy, and career development to help women advance professionally and economically. **[Explore our upcoming webinars today!](#)**

What's Happening at the Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court recently heard oral arguments in *Little v. Hecox* and *West Virginia v. BPJ*, two cases challenging state bans on transgender youth's participation in school sports. Blanket sports bans are harmful to all women and girls, leading to more harassment and bullying — especially for Black women and girls and students who don't fit gender stereotypes. **[See the amicus brief joined by AAUW to learn more.](#)**

Take a Stand

An advisory committee led by the U.S. Department of Education is considering different borrowing limits for “graduate” vs. “professional” degrees. This change may deter women from pursuing advanced degrees, especially since women more often rely on student loans. You'll have the opportunity to weigh in with a public comment: **[— sign up for AAUW Action Network alerts to stay up to date.](#)**

Invest in a More Equitable Future

AAUW's mission to advance gender equity through education and advocacy is more urgent than ever, and your support can make a powerful impact. By donating to the Greatest Needs Fund, the Defend Higher Education Fund, and the Public Policy Fund, you help ensure AAUW can respond to emerging challenges, drive policy change, and empower women in higher education and the workforce. **[Donate here.](#)**

Nancy Butler, Public Policy Director

Study Group News

Dear Friends,
Interested in joining an established Study Group? Check with the Chairs in the groups listed below. Those attending are required to be members in good standing. Guests may attend three meetings before being required to join AAUW. Here are your current possibilities.

Susan Gelber, Study Group Director

Art History

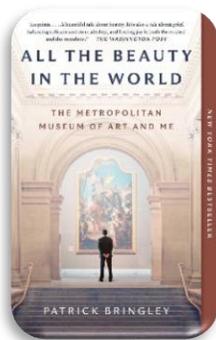
February 20, 2026 1:30 pm

Book Discussion:

All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me

by Patrick Bringley

Host: Susan Gelber



The Art Study Group met on Friday, January 23 at the Atrium in Red Bank. We saw the first part of a fascinating docuseries on the life of Frida Kahlo. We also discussed future events for the spring. Planning was made to go to the Guild of Creative Art in Shrewsbury, The Monmouth County Historical Society Museum, tours of Asbury Park, and a Garden Tour. Specific dates TBA. If you have any questions, contact the co-chairs:

Joan Fructer
Barbara Withers

French Conversation

Our group enables women with a good knowledge of the French language to maintain their fluency through some language structure reviews and conversations with other members on different topics. Upon the recommendation of our members, we have now added a literary component to some of our meetings.

To keep up with the needs of our members, we will be meeting once a **month (the second Thursday at 7:30 p.m.) through Zoom.**

Members are encouraged to participate (orally or written) at the monthly meetings.

If anyone is interested in joining the group, please contact the chair for further information.

Newcomers are always welcome.

Chair: Jeannine Maloney .

;

Insights Into Our Times

Insights, our non-fiction book group meets for discussion on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June. We vary our starting times to accommodate members' schedules. Our next meeting is on **Tuesday, February 10**, at 11 a.m. via Zoom. We will discuss *Lovely One*, the autobiography of Supreme Court justice, Ketanji Jackson Brown. Contact chair, Kathy Olsen, .or Sue Smith, suzesmith , who is scheduling the Zoom meeting. We will discuss upcoming selections and our plans for a luncheon gift basket. We welcome new members.

Contact chair, Kathy Olsen, , for more information.

Russian Short Stories

We have scheduled future Zoom meetings for the **third Thursdays of the month at 1 p.m.**

Contact Study Group Chair:
Stephanie Rose 732-492-9653

Writing Study Group

The Writing group is interested in a restart.
We need a few more members in order to begin.
Are you a writer . . . or want to be?
Writing fiction, memoir, history, poetry?
Need a sounding board?

We'd love to get together. Please contact Karen Topham, , if you'd like to join us.

Do you play bridge?
The AAUW bridge group is looking for players in their bridge group. If you have a partner and want to play or if you need a partner, please let us know. This group supports our Branch scholarships each year as well as awarding prizes to winners.

Call/text Linda Plamondon at for more information.

Book Sale Book Sale Book Sale

Old First Church
69 Kings Highway, Middletown
Lower Level, outside stairs

Open: Saturdays: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Thursdays: 10 a.m. - Noon
(except for holiday weekends)
Donate: Saturdays: 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Thursdays: 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Thursdays

Our AAUW Used Book Sale is doing well. We have a great group of very helpful, reliable volunteers who help out on Thursdays and Saturdays. We closed on 1/17 in anticipation of snow. Our **annual Half-Price Sale is January 31, 10:00 am- 2:00 pm**. Pass the word! A great time to get some bargains!!

We can always use more volunteers. If you want to join in the fun, contact Ruth Hodum, Kathy Olsen or Irene Gibson. We have an amazing group of volunteers who are keeping us going. We do need more customers, so continue to pass the word.

You'll find an amazing selection of books for all ages, many like new! Also CDs, DVDs, puzzles, games and cards. Remember that the Annual Scholarship Luncheon and the book sale are our main source of scholarship funds. .

Visit our website for donation policies www.aauw-nj-nmcb.org. Happy shopping.

Help Wanted: Do you know someone willing to build an easel-style sign for the Book Sale? The current one is falling apart after many years, although the printed signs on either side are fine. Perhaps a handyman, retired or working industrial arts teacher, carpenter, or woodworking hobbyist would be interested. Contact Kathy Olsen,

In Memoriam:

Anna Diaz -White Recipient of our Women of Achievement Award in 2021. She passed away in June 2025. She served as Executive Director of 180 Turning Lives Around for 32 years. She launched one of New Jersey's largest domestic violence shelters, established the Family Justice Center, and created a Youth Hotline.

Anne Louise Dunn



Anne was a member of our branch from 2018-2021 when she moved to FL. She was a graduate of NYU and Hunter was a Univ. Administrator. With solemn hearts, we announce the passing of Anne Louise Dunn in Lakewood Ranch, Florida, born in Lehigh, Pennsylvania, whose presence will be deeply missed, having departed on November 18, 2025 at the age of 91. Leave a sympathy message to the family on the memorial page of Anne Louise Dunn to pay them a last tribute. She was predeceased by: her parents, Joseph and Jessie; and her brother Joseph. She is survived by: her children, Lorraine Gearing and Jean Shames; her sister Susan Denogean; and many grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, her family requests donations in Anne's honor to the Matawan Methodist Food Pantry c/o Matawan United Methodist Church, 478 Atlantic Avenue, Aberdeen, New Jersey, 07747.

Esther Pavelka Esther was an Honorary Life Member of AAUW having joined in 1966. She was President of our branch from 1971-1973.



Esther L. Pavelka, 96, passed away peacefully on December 27, 2025. She was predeceased by her husband of 50 years, John Pavelka. She is survived by her daughters, Joyce Lehman, Nancy Pavelka, and Jill Pappas, and their husbands; and five grandchildren: Parker Lehman, Julia Luebs, Melanie Luebs, John Pappas IV, and Alex Pappas. Esther was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother who lived with dignity, grace, and a smile. She was deeply involved in her church, ministry, women's groups, and Garden Club, and she touched many lives through teaching and service. In her later years at The Atrium, she remained active in the welcoming committee and book club and hosted a one-woman art show. Her contagious joy and generous spirit will be missed by all who knew her. A Memorial Service was held on Thursday, January 8 at 11 am at Tower Hill Presbyterian Church.

Ann Wasserman

June 25, 1940 - January 1, 2026

Ann joined our branch in 2008 and was an active participant of the Insights Study Group until her passing. Ann Morra Wasserman, 85, of Long Branch, died on Thursday, January 1.

Ann was born on June 25, 1940 in Brooklyn, NY to the late Nancy and Harry Wasserman. She was raised there until an early age when her family moved to Long Branch, NJ where they had a summer home. Ann attended Star of the Sea Academy and graduated from Saint Francis College in 1964 with a Bachelor of Arts in Education. She later received a master's degree in education from Columbia University. Ann taught students with special needs for the Middletown Township Board of Education for sixteen years before retiring in 1981.

Ann enjoyed reading, travelling, swimming, skiing, skating, sailing and all animals. She had many pets in

her lifetime, most notably her guide dogs. Ann was a smart and adventurous woman, able to make friends wherever she went.

She is predeceased by her parents and her brother, David Wasserman.

Ann is survived by her niece Julia and her husband David Ryan, and many loving cousins and dear friends. A memorial gathering will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026 from 10:00 am until the time of the service at 12:00 pm at the Woolley-Boglioli Funeral Home, 10 Morrell Street, Long Branch.

In lieu of traditional remembrances, Ann's family asks with gratitude that donations in her memory be made to The Seeing Eye (www.seeingeye.org)

For messages of condolence, or to share a favorite memory of Ann, please visit her page of tribute at www.woolleyboglioli.com.



Ann Wasserman and her seeing-eye dog, Eunice

NetWorks is published by the Northern Monmouth County Branch of AAUW. Upcoming due dates for copy Thursday, February 26 for March issue; Thursday, March 26 for April issue; Monday, April 27 for May issue; Wednesday, May 27 for June issue. Please submit copy to Karen Topham, Editor, kptopham@gmail.com.

Send address changes, names of prospective members, membership applications and checks, and questions about non-receipt of the newsletter to:

Judy Kramer and Mary Lea Burden, Membership, Co-directors

P.O. Box 398, Red Bank, NJ 07701

aauw.nmcb@gmail.com

Our electronic mailing list enables us to inform you about opportunities for AAUW members that arise too late for publication in *NetWorks*. You can be sure that we carefully evaluate each notice before we send it out.

Please note that the use of the branch email list is for branch activities only. Members wishing to share other information with branch members are invited to submit a notice to the "Networking" column in *NetWorks*.

Something to share? Please send the information to Karen Topham for the next *NetWorks* due the last week of February.

To share with the Branch:

According to a new report from PEN America, public schools across the U.S. saw more than 6,800 book bans in the 2024-25 school year. A new documentary, “The Librarians,” examines the experiences of school librarians who’ve found themselves on the front lines of a battle against censorship.

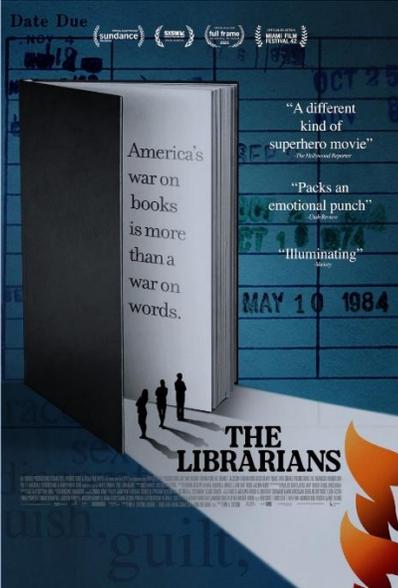
22 Festival Awards

Red Bank Public Library presents
THE LIBRARIANS

Run time: 1hr 32min Not Rated

**Saturday, February 7
12PM**

**Thursday, February 12
6PM**



Date Due
trov
sundance
sundance
full frame
MIAMI FILM FESTIVAL 2024

“A different kind of superhero movie”
—The Hollywood Reporter

“Packs an emotional punch”
—The Guardian

“Illuminating”
—New York Times

America's war on books is more than a war on words.

THE LIBRARIANS

Light refreshments will be served.



Scan here to reserve your seat!



This program is made possible by the generous support of the Foundation for the Red Bank Public Library.

84 W. Front St. | redbanklibrary.org | redbanklibrary@gmail.com

Reserve your seat by scanning the QR code or calling the Red Bank Library 732-842-0690.



American Association of University Women
Northern Monmouth County Branch
P.O. Box 398
Red Bank, NJ 07701

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class. Membership is open to any graduate holding an associate degree or equivalent, baccalaureate, or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university. AAUW-NMCB is designated as a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations to the branch, as well as to the national organization, are fully tax-deductible. AAUW is a highly rated charity.

AAUW Used Book Sale



The store is located at:
Old First Church
69 Kings Highway
Middletown

Open: Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. through June.
Thursdays from 10 a.m. to Noon through June.

Donations: Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Thursdays 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

(The sale is closed on holiday weekends.)

Have you been missing AAUW's *Outlook* magazine that used to arrive in the mail?

Go to www.aauw.org. At the bottom of the home page, sign up for news and updates with your email address and zip code.

Stay Connected!

AAUW www.aauw.org

AAUW-NJ <https://aauwnj.org>

AAUW-NMCB www.aauw-nj-nmcb.org

Branch phone 732-275-2237

AAUW Action Network www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/two-minute-activist/



Join AAUW-NMCB on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/AAUW.NMCB/>