

Annual Branch Meeting News

During the business portion of our annual meeting, held on Thursday, May 29, the following nominees were voted into board positions:

Co-Presidents: **Heather Balczarek** and **Peggy James**

Treasurer: **Sue Monroe**

Secretary: **Sue Smith**

Communications Director: **Karen Topham**

Public Policy Director: **Nancy Butler**

Program Co-Directors: **Theresa Blackburn** and **Ellen Jackson**

They will serve in these positions for a 2-year term. Congratulations to each of you!



Newly elected board members, from left to right:
Sue Smith, Heather Balczarek, Sue Monroe, Nancy Butler, Ellen Jackson

June 2025 Branch Meeting

Date and time TBD

Gather with members and friends

To celebrate the year and to install new board members.

Watch for an email announcement.



Presidents' Message

Dear members,

Summer is finally here! We hope everyone is enjoying the warmer weather and longer days. We wanted to send you an update on what the branch has accomplished this year with a more detailed report to be filed later in June.

This year, thanks to **Barbara Withers**, Program Director, the branch held seven monthly branch programs, including hosting the Interbranch meeting in March. We hope you had a chance to attend multiple meetings.

Barbara's creativity and dedication to public policy produced amazing and informative programs all year long.

- **October** – "It's My Vote" Collaboration with Brookdale students and LWV
- **November** - "Building Resiliency for Today and Tomorrow's Challenges."

Workshop on coping with life's challenges and stresses presented by Diane Lang, a nationally recognized speaker, educator, and certified positive psychology coach.

- **December** – Festive Food and Art Celebration – sharing of holiday dishes and memories at the Shrewsbury Historical Society
- **February** – Lunch and Learn “The Movement: How Women’s Liberation Transformed America” we watched the video from the NY Public Library on “The Movement...” by Clara Bingham and discussed our impressions afterwards
- **March** – Interbranch meeting. This Year was NMCB’s turn to host. Attendees watched a video about the movement for women’s equality in the mid-20th followed by a multigenerational panel presentation and discussion; this was a well-attended and popular event.
- **May** – “Equity for Women in Higher Education” video from AAUW national followed by breakout group discussions on what we can do to preserve gains already made and advocate for the future.
- **June** – End of year social meeting is being planned to take a moment to relax and reconnect with friends

Public Policy – **Nancy Butler**, director of public policy, kept us all informed through NetWorks and announcements at branch meetings on what National is working towards and how we, as individuals can help make a difference. Nancy attended many webinars and meetings held by National and NJ AAUW to stay informed on the different Public Policy initiatives. She passed along information to the branch and board and also posted important updates on the branch facebook page. We are glad for her ability to distill the webinars and updates into easy to manage action items for members.

Membership – At every branch event, **Mary Lea Burden** and **Judy Kramer**, membership directors, welcomed attendees. They have

worked tirelessly to increase the membership this year by reviving the meet and mingle meeting for prospective members, working with the C/U reps to sign up students for student memberships, and staying on top of national membership drives like the Shape the Future program.

Communications – Our intrepid communications director, **Karen Topham**, released nine beautifully edited issues of NetWorks. Each issue was filled with information on upcoming branch programs and events as well as public policy announcements, national events, new members, submissions from members, and photos from past events. We look forward each month to the new issue! Note from Marian – A big thank you also to **Heather Balczarek** who continued to serve as Webmaster helping many of us communicate with other branch members and the community throughout the year, all while also serving as Co-president.

Education outreach – Thank you to **Connie Goddard**, Education outreach director, for working on the branch scholarships to Brookdale. Connie realized the process had changed and spearheaded a committee to realign the scholarships to our goals. She also ensured that our branch continues the presentation of the annual award to the high school senior girl with the highest grade point average in mathematics at each of the high schools in northern Monmouth County.

Development – The development directors, **Kathy Olson** and **Margaret Graf**, planned and ran a beautiful and extremely well attended scholarship luncheon. The Used Book Sale, managed by **Kathy Olson**, **Ruth Hodum**, and **Irene Gibson**, continues to raise money for scholarships and is a beloved part of the community.

Study Groups – **Susan Gelber**, study groups director, works tirelessly to maintain a relationship with the study groups. With the dwindling numbers of groups, she has worked to try to start new groups including a Spanish Conversation. If you are interested in starting a

special interest/study group, please contact Susan, she will be happy to help get it started!

In addition to the board positions noted above, the branch and board rely on the time and expertise of our elected **Treasurer** and **Secretary**. **Katharine McCleary** is the Treasurer who has managed our funds including bringing recommendations to the board that have increased the earnings that sustain our scholarships and special activities. **Sonia Dorn** has served as Branch Secretary for the past four years, faithfully recording the activities and actions of the board, records always available to any member.

This branch takes a large group of dedicated volunteers to run. Please consider next fall signing up to volunteer at the book sale or help with the program committee to plan programs or join the executive board.

We hope you enjoyed the programs and events of this branch over the fall and spring and are now looking forward to summer.

Summer is a good time to learn a new hobby, sport, or skill. You may know the discouraging quote “Jack of trades master of none,” but did you know the full quote is actually “Jack of all trades master of none, but often times better than master of one.” As educated women we should stay curious and remember “Tomorrow is often the busiest day of the week” ~ Spanish Proverb.

Happy Summer!
Heather and Marian



Marian Wattenbarger
Heather Balczarek

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership Is Everyone's Responsibility

Dues notices have been sent to all members, so **please do not pay your dues on the National website as this complicates the work for our treasurer.**

Please fill out the volunteer interest form on the reverse side of the dues page. We need your input as to how you can get involved in our many programs.

The Shape the Future membership campaign at the Scholarship luncheon on April 30 was very successful. We have 5 new members.

Mai Cleary

Fairfield U. CEO/President Oasis,
RN

Horseback riding, autism, arts

Susan DePalma

Real estate,
Part time retail

Making basket gifts,
collecting donations

Joan Hebert

Smith; Monmouth CPA, retired

Literature, Art, Politics

Joyce Antila Phipps

Yale Divinity; U Conn Law,
Hartford Seminary Attorney, Pastor

History, Theology, Arts

Anastasia Rubis

Brown; Montclair State Writer, author

Literature, film, travel

Co-Membership Directors:

Mary Lea Burden

Judy Kramer



Congratulations to Nancy Butler whose 50-year membership certifies her as an honorary life member of AAUW

PUBLIC POLICY NEWS AND RESOURCES

[AAUW's new strategic plan](#) was launched in May. "This new strategic plan reaffirms our core belief that education is the foundation of equity. At a time when higher education is threatened, we have chosen to center our work on advancing women in higher education, thus sharpening our focus and strengthening our ability to make a lasting impact," said CEO Gloria Blackwell. To see recent webinars about the new Strategic Plan, go to the [AAUW YouTube page](#).

Also in May, the national membership elected new members to the Board of Directors and voted on proposed changes to the Public Policy Program.

The new **AAUW Public Policy Principles & Priorities 2025-2027** has three main areas of focus: Education, Economic Security, and Social Justice and Civil Rights. Four Biennial Action Priorities will inform state and local action, including for our branch:

- **Reinstating Title IX rules** that strengthen and clarify protections for student survivors of sexual harassment and assault, ensure accommodations for pregnant and parenting students, and affirm protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **Defending inclusive education** from attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Reducing barriers to postsecondary success**, including increased financial support and manageable student debt.
- **Addressing non-tuition barriers** such as paid leave, childcare, and access to contraception and abortion care.

At our May 29 Branch meeting, we watched the video "AAUW: Standing Strong Against Attacks on Equity in Education," which also can be viewed on the [AAUW YouTube page](#). Then we broke into groups to discuss how we all, as individuals and as a group or in coalition, might take action on these issues. And we took out our phones and learned how to participate in the Action Network and use [Two-Minute Activist](#). If you have any questions about taking action, please contact me.

NCCWSL Update: As I write this, more than 200 students are attending the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) at the University of Maryland, College Park.

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.

Members have expressed interest in restarting the writing study group in September. Interested? Contact Karen Topham.

Also, if you are interested in joining a new Spanish Conversation study group, contact me.

Susan Gelber, Study Group Director

Art History

On May 22, the Art History study group visited the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers. Participants had a docent tour of the current exhibition, *Indigenous Identities, Aqui, Ahora y Siempre (Here, Now & Always)*. Curated by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, the exhibition features the work of contemporary Native American artists in a variety of media, including painting, beadwork, sculpture, and photography.



There was time after the tour to explore the permanent installation, *Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union*, and other galleries.



Indigenous Identities is on exhibit until December 21; the Zimmerli does not charge and is open Sunday through Saturday. Check their website <https://zimmerli.rutgers.edu/> for hours and directions. Download the app “Bloomberg Connects” to view images from the exhibit.

Watch for an email announcement for upcoming events. Suggestions welcome.

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.

Insights will meet on Tuesday, June 10, at 2pm at the home of Ruth Hodum, 855 Center St., Red Bank, to discuss titles for next fall's meetings.

RSVP to Ruth.
and send titles to chair, Kathy Olsen, a week prior to the meeting. New members are welcome.

New members are always welcome.
Chair: Kathy Olsen

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

Book Sale Book Sale Book Sale

Old First Church
69 Kings Highway, Middletown
Lower Level, outside stairs
732-275-2237

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

The shelves at our Used Book Sale are overflowing! Therefore, we are having a half-price sale before our annual end-of-the-year

BAG Sale, on Saturday, May 31, from 10:00 - 2:00. Sale includes all books (except recent releases), greeting cards, puzzles, CDs, DVDs and records.

You can do your Father's Day shopping with us!

On Saturday, June 28 we will have our annual Bag Sale, which allow our customers to fill a grocery bag with merchandise for \$5.00.

Perfect opportunity to stock up for your summer reading. We supply the bags. No limit! 10:00 - 2:00. Old First Church, 69 Kings Highway, Middletown. We look forward to seeing you. Thank you for your support!

We also would appreciate more volunteers. The Book Sale will be closed for July and August. Will reopen Saturday, September 6. Have a great summer!

To learn more about the AAUW and the book donation policy, visit aauw-nj-nmcb.org or call 732-275-2237.

A Special Thank You

Please thank the local business donors listed below for supporting AAUW's mission when you shop or dine with them.

- Anderson's Florist, Metuchen
- Bagel Station, Red Bank
- Bahr's Landing Restaurant, Highlands
- Balance, massage, and energy, Hazlet
- Brennan's Deli, Middletown, Rumson, Oakhurst
- Delicious Orchards, Colts Neck
- Greek Spot, Red Bank
- Little Silver Fish Market, Little Silver
- Lusty Lobster, Highlands
- Massage Envy, Shrewsbury
- Organize Your Space, Atlantic Highlands
- Patricia's, Holmdel
- Porta, Asbury Park
- River Road Books, Fair Haven

- The Salt Creek Grille, Rumson
- Seabrook Senior Living, Tinton Falls
- Shrewsbury Car Wash, Shrewsbury
- Starbucks, all locations
- Trader Joe's, Shrewsbury
- The Turning Point, Locations throughout NJ
- Uncle Giuseppe's Marketplace, Tinton Falls
- Wild Birds Unlimited, Middletown

NetWorks is published by the Northern Monmouth County Branch of AAUW. Please submit copy to Karen Topham, Editor.

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*.

Thank you to the following NMCB-AAUW study groups, members and friends who donated baskets, basket items, cash, and gift cards for the Scholarship Luncheon:

- The Art History Study Group
- The French Conversation Study Group
- The Insights Into Our Times Study Group
- Marilyn Baldi for her photographs
- Blake Patterson for his wooden bowls
- Theresa Blackburn, MaryLea Burden, Sonia Dorn, Susan Gelber, Irene Gibson, Margaret Graf, Ruth Hodum, Barbara Iwanski, Ellen Jackson, Alice MacPhee Jesmajian, Judy Kramer, Lauren Nicosia, Kathy Olsen, Maureen Paoni, Janet Richter, Carol Toolan, Karen Topham, Marian Wattenbarger



**REMEMBER TO LOOK FOR
YOUR INVITATION TO JOIN
US FOR AN END-OF-THE-
YEAR MEETING IN JUNE**



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 the
newsletter with your email address and
zip code.

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



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