

The Advance

The Bulletin of the Greater Wayne Area Branch of the AAUW



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<http://greaterwaynearea-nj.AAUW.net>

January-February 2026

AAUW GREATER WAYNE AREA BRANCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this branch shall be to further AAUW's mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello,

Winter is here; stay warm, stay safe, and read all about us. I hope you have enjoyed the holiday season, whether your celebrations were religious or secular, and that they brought you some good memories to take along for the new year.



Our branch held two speaker series seminars in November and December on Misinformation/Disinformation and Artificial Intelligence, respectively. I hope you enjoyed them. I do wonder if speaker seminars appeal to you, and our program committee welcomes your feedback. Please contact me with opinions, comments, and/or suggestions.

Please see the feature in the right-hand corner of page 3 of this newsletter. This feature was introduced in the last Advance. Thus, in addition to the informative description of AAUW National and NJ Action updates by Karen Wertheimer, we try to distill a few recent or current National and State initiatives for you. I hope you are proud of being a part of a much bigger organization that moves equality issues forward.

January and February will be filled with interest group meetings, including the newest three groups - Volunteerism, Travel, and Poetry. Maybe you want to consider participating in these new groups or the more established ones. Yes, we have a total of 15! Read on to learn about the activities of many of these in the rest of this newsletter.

Please stay tuned for another speaker seminar for Women's History Month that we think will be informative and entertaining. Spoiler alert: "Women in Space" on March 18. More information to follow.

As always, I am grateful for your support of our branch of AAUW in whatever fashion it may be (time, money, leadership, participation).

With my warm, winter regards,

Linda Nardone

INTEREST GROUP INFO

Monday **Bridge** (Ruth Liston) 12:30
Tuesday 2:00 **Mahjong** (Ruth Liston)
First Tuesday **Canasta** 12:00 (Ruth Liston)
Second Tuesday 2:00 **Cocktails & Conversation (1)** (Ruth Liston/Joan London)
Fourth Tuesday 2:00 **Cocktails & Conversation (2)** (Jean Billings)
First Wednesday 1:00 **Lit Group** (Randi Galanowsky)
Fourth Wednesday 2:00 **Poetry Group** (Jean Billings)
Thursday 12:30 **Bridge** (Ruth Liston)
Second Thursday **Lunch Bunch** (Ann Sheridan)
Third Friday 1:00 **Current Events** (Barbara O'Connor/Barbara Stomber)
Fourth Friday **Culinary Group** (Carolyn Noble)
Last Friday of month **Creative Circle** (Cindy Orosy)
Movie Group 4 times a year (Julie Tiso)
Volunteer Group - Ad hoc (Joan London)
Travel Group - Ad hoc (Linda Nardone)

HOLIDAY PARTY 2025

Our AAUW group gathered for this year's Holiday Party on December 7. Carol Yomtov generously made her lovely clubhouse available and produced and photographed this festive event. We dined on a tasty Italian buffet featuring sausage & peppers, eggplant parmigiana, antipasto, chicken francese, cavatelli & broccoli, and more. Delicious desserts were provided by our own talented bakers. Yum!

After our meal, we enjoyed some memories of the past year and joined in singing holiday songs. Once again, we thank Carol and her helpers for bringing this event together so beautifully!

Happy 2026 to all!



Carol Palmer Yom Tov photographer

VOLUNTEERING

Two meetings have been held for those interested in volunteering. At the first, possible opportunities were discussed. The second meeting, held in early December, provided those who have begun volunteering an opportunity to discuss their experiences. Other options were discussed for those who have not yet begun.

I will be sending out a survey in January to determine who is currently volunteering and who would be interested in initiating a volunteer activity.

Joan London

COCKTAILS & CONVERSATIONS (1)

This group has been meeting monthly and enjoying camaraderie and conversations. In December, it sponsored a holiday white elephant exchange along with holiday food.

*Joan London
Ruth Liston*



Carol Palmer Yom Tov photographer

2026 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

AAUW Greater Wayne Area Branch Supporting Academic Opportunity

The application for the 2026 Scholarship Program is now available online at <http://greaterwaynearea-nj.aauw.net/Scholarship>.

The Scholarship Program aims to acknowledge and assist non-traditional students who demonstrate strong academic performance, financial need, and a commitment to contributing positively to their communities. This program aims to provide financial assistance to help these students reach their educational and career goals.

- ★ Applicants must be 25+ years old, pursuing a first bachelor's degree, and enrolled at an accredited college or university in Fall 2026.
- ★ Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0
- ★ Demonstrated leadership in extracurricular activities, community service, or work experience.

The Scholarship Committee examines each eligible application upon receipt and convenes after the April 10 deadline to select the recipient(s) for this year's awards. In 2025, our branch gave three \$3,500 scholarships and donated \$500 to the AAUW National Greatest Needs Fund. Individual scholarships are presented at the Scholarship and Awards Dinner in May.

The Greater Wayne Area Branch is dedicated to helping women aged 25 and older advance toward their educational and career goals. Your financial support is vital to making this program successful. Thank you for your donations in the past and for your generous contributions to the Ask Letter, which will arrive soon in your mailbox.

The Scholarship Committee

*Lorraine LaShell, Mary Anne Lund, Diane Ricart
Barbara Stomber, Linda Trongone*

COCKTAILS & CONVERSATIONS (2)

C & C 2 invites new members to join the group on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 2 p.m. Please contact me if you would like to join.

Jean Billings

CURRENT EVENTS

Our December Current Events meeting celebrated the holidays with discussions related to the holidays and fabulous food created by members of the group. We began with a presentation on the evolution of Santa by Cindy Orosy. Not only did we learn about Santa's predecessor, Saint Nicholas, but also how some version of Santa is celebrated today around the world. Arnavaz Taraporevala further contributed to the holiday theme by introducing us to Yalda, the Zoroastrian holiday of the winter solstice or the rebirth of the sun, celebrating light over darkness every December 21. Arna also volunteered to be the host at our next meeting on Friday, January 16.



We found it difficult to nail down a specific topic for the customary presentations for our next meeting so we decided to have a fluid discussion among ourselves regarding the myriad of topics in current events. So for January's meeting we'll explore a news event that we would like to share and elicit feedback from the members of our group. It should stimulate lively discussion and provide a great learning experience for all of us.

We ended with a White Elephant exchange with many beautiful gifts and were left with a memorable way to combine current events and the holidays with our AAUW friends.

Barbara Stomber
Barbara O'Connor
 Current Event Chairs

CULINARY GROUP

The culinary group enjoyed Thanksgiving in October with a delicious roasted turkey prepared by Joan London. Members provided the side dishes, which included stuffing, gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, veggies, and pecan tarts.

Future themes for 2026 will include Veg Up, Food Around the World, and Brunch.

Carolyn Noble
 Culinary Group Chair



The beautiful painting behind the table was done by Joan's father.



Carol Palmer Yom Tov photographer

TECH TREK

We will now be actively participating in selecting the girls from Passaic County to attend the week-long STEM program this summer. Stephanie Batory, a new member, has joined the committee and will head up the interview process, which will take place in March. Thank you, Stephanie, for coordinating this.

We have already received one application and have a second one in the pipeline. We do not know how

many students will be accepted from Passaic County, but the hope is that we can offer this to several students.

Linda Nardone has graciously offered to fund \$1,000 toward Tech Trek tuition. If you would like to make a specific donation to this effort, please contact me.

Joan London

In One Woman's Opinion: by Dorothy E. Quinn

A FASCINATING TRAVEL SUGGESTION FOR ANCIENT HISTORY BUFFS

The New Year always brings one to a place of making new plans! To those with a bit of wanderlust or a burning curiosity for the accomplishments of man, I must share some of the highlights of my journey to Egypt this past fall. The surprising discoveries of this trip started before I even landed! Through my window I viewed the vast span of desert divided by the Nile. On the east and west banks lie wide fertile green strips of land, on the south are primitive fishing villages, and to the north, a bustling metropolis, visually demonstrating how the Nile serves as the source of life for this country.

Cairo is a large bustling city crowded with high rises. Our cab driver to the hotel wrestled with the traffic with the greatest of ease amidst horn blowing, bicycles, and heavy traffic, but all somehow managed to navigate intersections without traffic lights or organized lanes! Despite the traffic, Cairo is an amazing modern city where almost all of its nearly 25 million inhabitants dwell in multi-family structures. Ninety percent of the population are Sunni Muslim, and the rest are Coptic Christians.



Cairo has three main museums: The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization, complete with sarcophagi, statues, a copy of the Rosetta Stone, and a 35,000 year-old prosthetic toe; the GEM (the newly opened Grand Egyptian Museum) housing the golden treasures of King Tutankhamun's tomb, among many antiquities; and the Salah El-Din

Citadel, once an ancient outpost and mosque protecting the city rivaling the Blue Mosque in Istanbul.

The most popular sites are the Pyramids and the Great Sphinx of Giza, which lie on a plateau outside the city limits. I marveled at the ability to build these mammoth structures with the technology of 5000 BC! The ancient Egyptians were an advanced civilization with a knowledge of geometry, architecture, and physics that befuddle the contemporary tourist. Of course, no plateau visit would be complete without a camel ride and warm interactions with local tour guides.

If Cairo captures the mix of ancient and modern Egypt, Luxor, a one-hour flight south of Cairo, demonstrates the expanding knowledge of Egyptian civilization from the Middle Period, approximately 3500 - 125 BC. We boarded riverboats at the Luxor port to sail to the ancient sites located on or near the Nile. Luxor, formerly known as Thebes, as named by the Greeks, was the center of development, building, art, and progress during this period. The Dendera Temple in Luxor is one of the best preserved complexes to demonstrate the art and building skill of the Ptolemaic Era (mid-fourth century BC). You can venture to the subterranean necropolis to view the crypts and tunnels filled with hieroglyphics describing the lives of the pharaohs, the myths, and spells. The temple ceilings still preserve their vivid colors and depict the zodiac calendar and the gods that ruled the skies and determined one's fate. During this period, the pharaohs abandoned the construction of pyramids as burial sites and built their tombs in the rises of the mountains bordering the Nile. This area is known as the Valley of the Kings. The Setis, Ramses, and King Tut, to name a few, are buried in this mountainside along with their staff and nurses. King Tut's tomb houses his mummified body, so well preserved, with his head



continued on next page

and feet exposed! Across the Nile is the Mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, the first female pharaoh, awaiting her return.

The village of Esnu allows travelers to experience village life along the Nile. Tourists can stroll the narrow pathways and observe artisans busy pulling, baling, dyeing, and weaving cotton, laundering gabaleyas (Egyptian long-dress garb), and making baladis (Egyptian flatbread), and of course selling scarves, jewelry, etc.



The furthest south we ventured was to the Aswan Dam. It made the Hoover Dam seem like a miniature model! It extends 300

miles across the Nile, creating Lake Nasser, and is responsible for providing electricity, water, and irrigation to most of Egypt. Those Egyptian engineers still continue to awe the world.

Heading back north on the Nile, we visited a Nubian village whose inhabitants' darker skin color and features are more African than Northern Egyptians, who have lighter Arab coloring and features. The village is charming, resembling Santorini with small, white, beehive stucco homes. These villages, located on sand dunes, use camels as transportation instead of donkeys. The Nubians live very primitively and even keep alligators as pets!

We visited many other temples, but I saved the best for last - the Karnak Temple in Luxor. The complex is located on 200 acres and took 1,500 years to build. There are 135 immense columns in the main building, each 70 feet tall. This was truly the most amazing wonder I have ever experienced. The soaring obelisk greets visitors as rows of sphinxes line the entrance. It truly takes your breath away.

I could go on about this wonderful journey, but anyone with wanderlust should top their bucket list with a visit to this incredible country.



OASIS DONATION

It was a joy to deliver the children's gifts you generously donated to Oasis.

Again, I was able to drop them off at Oasis and have a conversation with my contact person, Wanda. She gave me a tour of the toy room where the parents will choose gifts for their families.

Thank you for making this possible!

Diane Snyder Ricart
Social Concerns



MEMBERSHIP

I am very proud to announce that 2025 was a banner year for membership--the Greater Wayne Branch has accepted 13 new members. HOORAY!!

I am continuing to have Meet and Greet sessions---- They include a short morning get together with the new members and their sponsors. No work assignments--just learning something more about the sponsoring member and the new member. Look for your email with the date of the gathering.

Happy New Year All.

Ruth Liston

POETRY GROUP

The Poetry Group continues to enjoy the fun of sharing our finds and going deeper into the joy of words! We welcome new members. We meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 2:00 at Jean Billings' house.

Jean Billings

LUNCH BUNCH

Although Lunch Bunch has been on hiatus for the holidays, its leaders (Ann Sheridan and Pat Durante) have been sampling new restaurants with varied cuisines. Stay tuned for our first gathering in 2026!

Ann Sheridan
Pat Durante

MOVIE GROUP

We movie lovers had a good year! As a group, we saw "Paperclips," "Downton Abbey," and "Nuremberg." And we watched several movies and series on Netflix. Discussions and/or dinner followed.

Hopefully we will start 2026 with a group showing of "Eleanor the Great." If it's on Netflix, Ruth has graciously offered her home to watch it. Details will be coming.

If anyone has heard of a film that would be interesting for the group, let me know.

Happy New Year!

Julie Tiso

CREATIVE CIRCLE

Calling all creative members: all who are creative, artistic, and/or those who want to be. We will be hosting a meeting to explore options for restarting our Creative Circle group - arts and crafters, knitting, painting, writing and scrapbooking, jewelry, sewing, and more. Whatever type of crafts and art you would like to engage in, learn about, or explore is up for discussion. Bring your ideas and wish lists and meet at Cindy's house, 28 Eleron Place, Wayne, on Friday, January 30 at 1 p.m. Please email Cindy to let her know if you will be coming.

Cindy Orosy
Creative Group Leader

LIT GROUP

The Lit Group meets on the first Wednesday of each month. We will be holding some of our discussions via Zoom because of winter weather and/or the distant location of the leader.

January 7, 2026, 1 p.m.

This is Happiness, by Niall Williams
Leader: Barbara O'Connor
Host: Zoom

February 4, 2026, 1 p.m.

Fellowship Point,
by Alice Elliot Dark
Leader: Jean Billings
Host: Jean Billings and/or Zoom

March 4, 2026 1 p.m.

Atmosphere, by Taylor Jenkins Reid
Leader: Edvie Canavan
Host: Ruth Liston

April 1, 2026 1 p.m.

Flashlight, by Susan Choi
Leader: TBD
Host: TBD

May 6, 2026, 1 p.m.

What We Can Know,
by Ian McEwan
Leader: TBD
Host: TBD

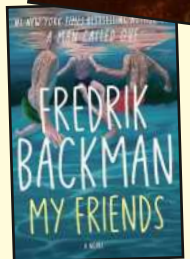
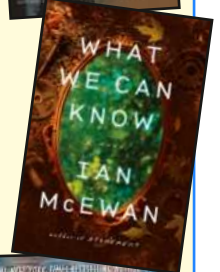
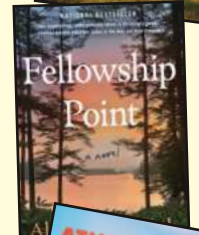
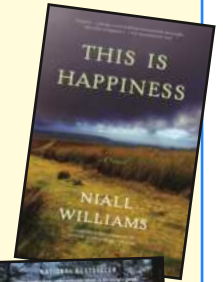
June 3, 2026, 1 p.m.

My Friends, by Fredrik Blackman
Leader: Joan London
Host: Joan London

If you would care to host or lead any of these meetings, or have alternate book suggestions, please speak up.

Enjoy your reads!

Randi Galanowsky
Literary Group Chair



AAUW Policy Activities

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. Our nonpartisan, nonprofit organization has more than 170,000 members and supporters across the United States, as well as 1,000 local branches and more than 800 college and university members. AAUW of New Jersey is the state affiliate representing approximately 900 members in 17 branches throughout New Jersey. Learn more and join us at www.aauwnj.org.

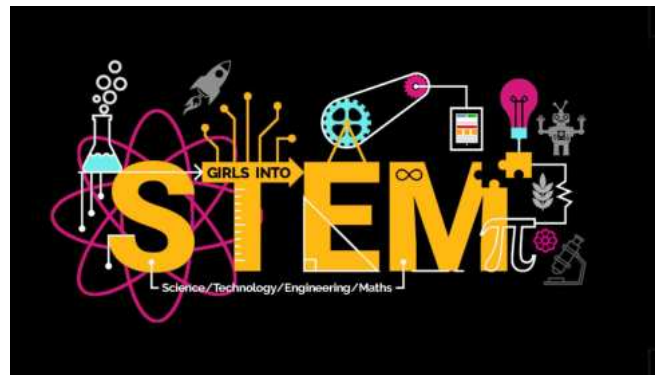
AAUW National has been instrumental all year in supporting and/or dissenting with a number of government policies such as opposing the Working Families Flexible Act, which weakens overtime protections; opposing the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education; urging U.S. Representatives to support the Healthy Families Act; affirming our joint commitment towards ensuring children and youths with disabilities affirming our joint commitment towards ensuring children and youth with disabilities receive the education and support fundamental to their growth and development; and more. You can read about these activities on the AAUW website at www.aauw.org. Now we need every AAUW member and advocate to lift their voices.

STEM FOR GIRLS

That's the message of AAUW NJ programs for middle-school girls. AAUW NJ Tech Trek will be at Stockton University July 26 - August 1, 2026. Suggest that middle-school and gifted teachers you know nominate a 7th-grade camper! See www.aauwnj.org for application forms and deadlines.

At Tech Trek, girls are immersed in a world that empowers and encourages them to think about themselves as future scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and computer specialists. After seeing how effective the program is (alumnae are more likely than their peers to take advanced science and math classes and eventually go to college), AAUW decided to take the program nationwide.

Campers in NJ take part in activities like programming robots, extracting their own DNA, formulating lip gloss in a chemistry lab, visiting the Atlantic Ocean, the **FAA Technical Center**, e-Sports Lab. or the Pinelands Preserve, and much more! Tech Trek has been shown to significantly increase girls' self-



confidence and their interest in and excitement about the STEM fields, which is why AAUW New Jersey continues to host Tech Trek at Stockton University.

At Tween Tech, middle-school (6th-8th grade) girls are involved in a day of hands-on technology workshops. This mini-conference is designed to develop girls' interest and self-confidence in STEM, featuring:

- ✳ Local female teachers, professors, and professionals to lead hands-on workshops for middle school girls
- ✳ AAUW and university volunteers to talk with the girls and their teachers about STEM majors and careers
- ✳ Information about the upcoming Tech Trek NJ Summer Camp for rising 8th graders

Teen Tech is a one-day event designed to demonstrate that STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) education and careers are exciting, relevant, and accessible to girls and women. Teen Tech participants engage in laboratory, engineering, and math workshops presented at a host college/university, giving them confidence-building experiences in a real college setting.

Teen Tech has been a project of the AAUW NJ, held in collaboration with a host college/university, for nearly 20 years. Key partners that have lent their expertise in the past to Teen Tech include the Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers (IEEE), NJ Technology and Engineering Educators Association, and the NJ School Counselors Association.

Kudos to AAUW Wayne for supporting NJ efforts to help girls think about themselves as scientists. The goal is to reach as many girls as possible. Our support makes that possible. Please read Joan London's Tech Trek article elsewhere in this newsletter.

Karen Wertheimer
Public Policy

AAUW GREATER WAYNE AREA BRANCH

PURPOSE

The purpose of this branch shall be to further AAUW's mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

In principle and 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.

VALUE PROMISE

By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.



empowering women since 1881

Greater Wayne Area Branch

MEMBER TOWNS

Bloomingtondale
Englewood
Franconia, NH
Kinnelon
Little Falls
Mt. Pleasant, SC
Montville
New Foundland
North Haledon
Nutley
Old Tappan
Parsippany
Pompton Lakes
Pompton Plains
Riverdale
Teaneck
Wayne

GREATER WAYNE AREA BRANCH OFFICERS 2025-2026

ELECTED OFFICERS

POSITION	OFFICER
President	Linda Nardone
Vice President	Jean Billings
Treasurer	Elaine Kirsh
Secretary	Jan Rutherford
Membership/Sunshine	Ruth Liston/ Kim Fitzpatrick
Program VPs	Arna Taraporevala/ Carol Palmer Yomtov
Communications VP	Lorraine LaShell

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Advance Design	Peggy Gardner
Advance Editor	Randi Galanowsky
Advance Special Feature	Dorothy Quinn
Environmental Issues	Barbara Stomber
Fundraising	Joan London/ Karen Wertheimer
Public Policy	Karen Wertheimer
Scholarship	Lorraine LaShell
Social Concerns	Diane Ricart
STEM	Linda Nardone/ Barbara O'Connor
Website	Lorraine LaShell

INTEREST GROUP CHAIRS

Cocktails & Conversation	Ruth Liston/ Joan London/ Jean Billings
Creative Circle	Cindy Orosy
Culinary Group	Carolyn Noble
Cultural Event	Arline Lowe
Current Events	Barbara O'Connor/ Barbara Stomber
Games	Ruth Liston
Lit Group	Randi Galanowsky
Lunch Bunch	Ann Sheridan/ Pat Durante
Movies	Julie Tiso
Travel	Linda Nardone