

The Allentonian

May 2022

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A publication of the American Association of University Women
Allentown (PA) Branch
Breaking through barriers!

A-TEAM MESSAGE

Eighty three years ago, in May 1939, 41 members of the Bethlehem AAUW branch met at the Hotel Traylor to found the Allentown AAUW.

During the ensuing 83 years, the Allentown branch membership numbers grew. Members developed and led a variety of ambitious projects, each with the underlying aim of realizing the AAUW mission. AAUW members hoped to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

Our Allentown branch developed a plan for Allentown's first day care center in 1941. In 1959, the branch's first book sale netted \$466 which was used for fellowships, leading to the Interrupted Studies Grants Program in 1968. When the Allentown branch celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2014, we were continuing to support a number of long term projects, and planning new initiatives to advance equity for women and girls and education in general. The Dictionary Project with Central Elementary School, the Let's Read Math program in cooperation with the Bethlehem branch, the local Gateway to Equity award, support for national AAUW's National Conference for College Women Student leaders, national AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund, and national AAUW's diversity outreach programs were all on our busy agendas.

While Allentown branch members were working together to promote education, intellectual growth, individual worth, and development of opportunities and equity for women and girls, we all enjoyed the additional benefits of growing and lasting friendships with our AAUW sisters. We have been privileged to share our experiences and ideas with other branch members in interest groups and study groups.

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A-TEAM MESSAGE, continued

The past two years have been difficult ones for individuals and for organizations. The Allentown AAUW branch moved to a model of team governance in an attempt to share leadership responsibilities across a larger group of members. In January 2022, branch leaders (A-Team) determined that they were unable to maintain the branch successfully without greater member participation. On April 1, the A-Team sent out a ballot to each of the 58 Allentown branch members. Of the 37 members who responded, 28 members voted to disband the branch, five voted against disbanding, and four abstained. The A-Team is now engaged in completing that directive.

Allentown AAUW members should be aware that they can remain AAUW members:

Branch members who wish to continue as members of an active branch are encouraged to transfer to the Bethlehem branch. Dues are \$93. To initiate the transfer, email Linda Robbins, Bethlehem's finance officer at LRob164832@aol.com.

Any member can renew as a national member. Contact Susan Nenstiel at nenstiel@ptd.net for information.

Honorary Life members will continue as national members. In addition, they can also transfer to the Bethlehem branch and remain a member of AAUW PA as well.

Paid Life Members will continue as national members. They can also transfer to the Bethlehem branch and remain a member of AAUW PA as well.

Members who wish to continue interest groups independently are, of course, free to do so.

And we can certainly remain friends.

Sincerely,

The A-Team

Susan Nenstiel, Cathy Kane, Peggy Tyson, Ginny Delph, Linda Friscia–Oppe,
Lesley Lojko, Karen Peiffer, Bev Tisdale, Judy Trach

AAUW Allentown Branch A-Team Meeting April 26, 2022

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM. Zoom meeting lead by Peggy Tyson.

Members Present: Ginny Delph, Linda Friscia-Oppe, Cathy Kane, Lesley Lojko, Susan Nenstiel, Karen Peiffer, Bev Tisdale, and Peggy Tyson.

Minutes: Minutes of March 9, 2022 meeting were reviewed. Motion to accept by Peggy and second by Bev. Passed.

Finance Report: Checks were dispersed in the amount of \$4,000 each to DeSales University, Cedar Crest College, Muhlenburg College and Lehigh Carbon Community College to be designated for scholarships for women. The same was offered to Penn State Lehigh Valley but they could not guarantee that the scholarship would go to a woman. The A-Team learned of an initiative at PSU called Launchbox Ladies. Launchbox Ladies is an educational series focusing on the unique challenges and victories of female entrepreneurs who impact the Lehigh Valley and beyond. The A-Team decided to give the \$4,000 originally designated for Penn State University to this initiative. After dispersal of these checks, there will be \$5,719.86 in the branch treasury. Susan made a motion to give \$2,500 to both Central Elementary School and to the Bethlehem AAUW Branch designated for women with interrupted studies. This was seconded by Lesley and passed and then amended with a second motion from Susan to increase the amount for Central to \$3,000. This was seconded by Peggy and passed. The remaining \$217.86 will go to AAUW national.

Membership and Dues: See New Business.

Program: No more programs.

Newsletter/Yearbook: Kathy O. is holding off on the May newsletter until after the report from this A-Team meeting. The May newsletter will be our branch's last newsletter.

Website: No report.

Public Policy: Lesley reminded us that PA Primary Day is May 17th.

Branch Updates:

- Book Corner – Cathy picked up all the remaining books and delivered them to Central School. She checked with Linda Robbins to determine the origin/ownership of the bookcase in the waiting room. Linda said that it was donated by the Cedar Crest College affiliate many years ago and it is ours. The Assistance Office would like for us to remove it. Cathy is working on finding it a home.

- Dictionary Project – Cathy ordered the dictionaries for Central for the 3rd graders for the next school year, stickered and delivered them.

- Gateway to Equity Award – No report.

- Central Elementary School – See Finance Report and Book Corner.

Old Business: NCCWSL – Susan says that NCCWSL is not in need of any funds.

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A-Team meeting minutes, continued

New Business: A \$5,000 donation was made by an anonymous branch member to AAUW National in the name of our branch making total donations from our branch this year at \$6949. Our branch will be recognized at the PA AAUW Convention in June with all the members of the A-Team as named honorees.

As required by national to dissolve a branch, first the PA AAUW membership vice president (Randi Blauth) and president (Ann Pehle) were notified of the intention to dissolve the branch. Then a vote by the branch members was conducted. A letter was sent via regular mail to all members with a return postcard giving each member the chance to vote yes or no to dissolve. 37 out of 56 members responded. There were 28 Yes votes, 5 No votes and 4 Abstentions. A majority was achieved and the branch will close. Susan will write up the announcement for the newsletter along with information on membership options: drop membership, remain a member of national only, or how to join another branch (Bethlehem, Easton etc.). She will also remind members that all study groups are still able and encouraged to continue to meet but just not as an AAUW entity. The Zoom option will still be available. Since any funds in the treasury will go to national or an affiliate when the branch closes, Susan will wait until the remaining monies have been dispersed to Central School and The Launchbox Ladies. Then Susan will notify Angie Cooper at AAUW national and the branch will close.

The closing of our branch after 83 years in existence has been an extremely difficult decision for all of the members of the A-Team to make. We all hope that each branch member will keep our mission close to her heart and continue to advocate for women and girls.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

The A-Team will have a final get together/meeting on a date to be determined in June.

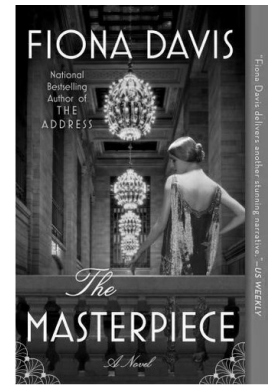


Wonderful news from Central Elementary School regarding the monies that our branch will be donating to them. The funds will be used to help fund their after school programs including Community Bike Works' Earn a Bike Program, Boy Scouts, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Baum School of Art, Push the Rock (a physical education program) and I-Station (a student enrichment program). What a great way to help the students at Central.



The Women's Literature Group will meet on May 16th at 12:00 p.m. at the home of Margie Weiss. Everyone is invited to bring a brown bag lunch, or feel free to join by Zoom at noon.

The group will discuss *The Masterpiece* by Fiona Davis



LEADERSHIP
The A-Team

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Literature of the Past and Present

Leader: Annette Bonstedt (610-395-5974)

Thursday, May 19, 12:00 pm.

Book planning session for 2022-2023

Lesley Lojko will host the meeting at her home.

There will be a Zoom option for those unable to attend.

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National Website: www.aauw.org State Website: aauw-pa.aauw.net/

AAUW Member helpline: 800-326-AAUW

AAUW MISSION STATEMENT

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

AAUW DIVERSITY STATEMENT

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.

AAUW LAF/EF

AAUW LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND aauw.org/what-we-do/legal-resources/ provides funding and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for sexual discrimination.

“A girl should be two things: who and what she wants.”

- Coco Chanel

Public Policy

Lesley Lojko, Chair

A political postcard I received in the mail the other day led me to discover that my state senate district has changed. We have been in the state senate district of Lisa Boscola #18 and now are in state senate district #14. I would guess that some of you are living in districts which have also changed. Our state house district has also changed, I believe. I recommend that you check your districts as well. I will be happy to help you find how to locate the new districts. This is all due to redistricting as a result of the most recent census.

Primary Election Day is May 17, 2022. I would guess you are all aware of the senatorial race as well as the governor's race.

AAUW public policy priorities will remain through 2023. We have focused on support of a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity and inclusivity. A second priority is "To achieve economic security for all, pay equity and fairness in compensation and benefits." A third priority is "To guarantee equality, individual rights and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society".

