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[www.bethlehem-pa.aauw.net](http://www.bethlehem-pa.aauw.net)

# **Bethlehem Bylines Brief**

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2020

## ***Are you missing the annual AAUW Holiday Luncheon?***

**Join us for a Zoom Chat on December 9, at 7 pm**

### ***This is a chance to share:***

- A favorite cookie or other yummy food recipe (virtually).
- A craft project you've been working on (knitting, needlework, painting, etc.).
- An old family tradition or a new way of celebrating during these times of COVID-19

The program committee knows this time of year will be difficult for many of us who will not be sharing their in the usual gatherings with family and friends. We thought our members might enjoy meeting via Zoom to show and tell some of their old and new activities to fill some of that loss.

If each participant takes a few minutes to talk about a project and offer the history and story behind it, we should have a very festive celebration.

### ***Join the fun. The more the merrier***

Sign up with Mary Lou Vernon [mlvaauw@gmail.com](mailto:mlvaauw@gmail.com)  
by December 7th. Wear your holiday attire or PJs.

## Wow! The November Program : A Trip into Technology at the BASD

What an amazing trip Marie Bachman took us on into the technology world of the Bethlehem Area School District. It turns out that online education doesn't just impact the way lessons are presented. There are more tentacles involved than on an octopus or jellyfish.

Fortunately, the school district had begun using technology in some aspects, such as creating a contact portal for parents, students and teachers prior to the pandemic. When the BASD discovered that 25% of students had no Internet access at home, they developed community partnerships that expanded access to technology and after school tutoring.

Did you know that Northampton County provided vouchers for additional Internet "hot spots" throughout the county to help resolve this problem? Way to go!!! Some of the other issues that needed to be addressed included:

- Providing "free" computers to all students (must be paid for by families if lost)
- Security not only for equipment, but safeguarding access to instruction.
- Preventing students from inappropriate browsing.
- Finding products that withstand the volume of students working at the same time.

In addition, faculty needed lecture and presentation tools are to teach math, science, woodworking, and choir/ band just to name just a few. Evaluation products were required not only for class work, but to assess student "attendance".

Much of this had to be done when the virus hit on March 16. Ms. Bachman's support staff of 30 had their hands full. Once the new school year started, they also had to serve as remote technology support. As we all know, computers have a mind of their own and don't always break down between 9 to 5!!

The successes have been many. Algebra assignments are completed and choir practice goes on virtually. Students are adaptable and the district is always searching for better ways to meet the goals of every student, teacher and parent. There will always be glitches, but Ms. Bachman and her staff are already thinking ahead. The next big hurdle will be when, and if, the district has to go totally virtual.

*Your Program Team*

### **The Challenges**

- Elementary students needed chromebooks at home
- Support Staff like Instructional Assistants now need a device
- Internet access at home
- Video conferencing tool that is safe and stable
- Teacher tech capabilities across all courses
- Student & Parent tech capabilities
- Safeguarding students' online browsing when at home
- Remote technology support for students and parents
- Coordinating Chromebook repairs, broken chargers
- Communicating with parents/students via telephone/text
- Change report card grading configurations to Pass/Fail
- Coordination with ELS, Special Ed Dept, and BAVTS to help students
- Support from English Learner Services Department for translation
- Touchless point-of-sale in cafeteria



## **Executive Team Message**

AAUW adopts Public Policy Priorities every two years. They establish the federal action issues which members across the country may focus their advocacy efforts on each year. Every member has a vote. The power is this originates and ends with the membership and their feedback on issues of critical need. These issues underscore AAUW's mission to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

Let your voice be heard through your advocacy efforts. Become a Two-Minute Activist now! As a voter, you hold an incredible amount of power over your elected officials. You're their boss, and they have to take your opinions into account. When a group of constituents focuses their voices collectively, we can shape the conversation. That's the power of AAUW's Two-Minute Activist Network.

Go to [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org), and click on Take Action, on right click on Two-Minute Activist and scroll down. Once on the link, scroll down to the many issues that AAUW has made their Public Policy. Click on a topic under Civil Rights, Equity or Education and view the legislative issues. If one feels particularly essential to you, read the information. At the bottom of the article is a place to fill in your personal information. Click Next, and then send it to your state legislators. Their page and addresses automatically appear.

***Just click Send. It is in your hands, and it indeed takes just two minutes.***

You have a voice, and AAUW provides a megaphone for your voices to be heard collectively .

*Your Executive Team*

## **Make Your Nominations - AAUW-PA State Awards** Presented in April and May

### **Awards:**

**Outstanding Woman-** a branch member who should be noted for meritorious service to the Bethlehem Branch and community.

**Member Making a Difference-** a member who has made a contribution toward the mission of the branch during the past year. This person exemplifies the spirit of AAUW but need not be a branch officer or committee chair.

**Gateway to Equity-** an individual who or organization which has shown by action or philosophy that they advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy or research.

Nominations should be sent to Linda Robbins, by December 31, 2020. Please submit the reason for your nomination(s) and a few sentences about the candidate to further clarify. Past winners of the "Outstanding Woman" and "Member Making a Difference" are listed in your AAUW-Bethlehem Yearbook.

Linda Robbins, Awards Committee Chair  
Linda Zimmerman  
Anne Hammersmith

## UPDATE BOOK FAIR 2021

As Co-Chairs, we have met several times since last year's Book Fair had to be cancelled. As Co-Chairs, there is much to do throughout the year in order to have a successful Book Fair, 2021.

To that end, we contacted the 2020 team asking if they were willing to continue in the same capacity as a Section Chair or other Committee position for Book Fair 2021. Many responded in the positive, and for that we are thankful.

We are keeping watch on Covid-19 and its possible effects on Book Fair 2021. We are brain storming ideas for working in the "Warming Room" that will keep us all safe. We will also keep you informed of decisions as they are made.

In these uncertain times, we realize that no definite decision can be made at this time.

Stay Safe and Enjoy the Holidays

Rita 610-365-2566

Amy 610-703-5834

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The Executive Team is reaching out to fill several positions. As with all branch offices, chairs may be assumed by one person or a committee of branch members. Chairs would coordinate with the Program Chair and Executive Team for planning and scheduling.

*This is a great way to meet new friends and get to know about the branch. Individuals, best buddies or fresh friends please volunteer and assist in supporting our shared values.*

**Public Policy Chair(s)** - Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

Advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

Provide members with information on local, state, national and international priorities that impact our mission.

Promote public discussion to ensure enlightened decisions on above priorities

Promote full access to civil and constitutional rights expanding voting rights

**Diversity/Intersectionality Chair** - Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

Strive for our work to be inclusive and intersectional.

Collaborate with diverse community groups and coalitions to promote equity.

Promote interaction through joint programming, community activities, networking and action.

We need your help to continue living our mission. For additional information or job description, please contact Linda Robbins (484-347-4416) or [lrob164832@aol.com](mailto:lrob164832@aol.com).

## **We're Shopping Small Businesses**

The Diversity: Deeds and Dialogue interest group members are inviting you to support Small Business Saturday on November 28 by shopping at the many multicultural-owned businesses in the Lehigh Valley and particularly Black-owned businesses in Easton. All small businesses need a boost this year and what better way to help than organizing a trip to downtown Easton to do your holiday shopping. Wear a mask, bring some sanitizer, and have some fun browsing local shops.

POWER Interfaith of the Lehigh Valley has published a list of 165 Black-owned businesses that would appreciate our business. There are four stores in Easton within walking distance of each other, making it easier to park and walk. We have listed those below as well as others also in Easton. As D:DD members shop we will be leaving a small business card with the owners as a way to identify themselves. Below that we have included the entire list. Enjoy and hope to run into you on 11/28!

—Khanisa's Dessert Shop, 118 Northampton Street, [www.khanisas.com](http://www.khanisas.com)

—Twice Chic Boutique, (clothing/accessories/consignment), 131 N. Third St. [www.twicechicboutique.com](http://www.twicechicboutique.com)

—True Hue Creations (tie-die clothing and accessories, body lotion, etc, 15 S. 2nd St.  
[www.truehuecreations.com](http://www.truehuecreations.com)

—Glow Garden (home decor) pop up store

Other locally owned Black business are:

—The Ice Cream Lounge, Sullivan Trail, Forks Township

—Bayou Southern Kitchen, Centre Square, Easton

—Board and Brush (DIY workshops), Corriere Road, Palmer Township

## **The Bethlehem Southside Arts District is promoting Small Business Saturdays.**

This will have its kick-off on Nov. 28 from 6 to 10 p.m. All the Small Business Saturdays will feature the Christmas Tree Trail featuring 15 decorated trees outside small businesses or in their windows. There will be a map of participating businesses and free cocoa, with different features each Saturday from November 28 through the following 3 Saturdays. You can find more details on the Southside Arts District Facebook page. [www.facebook.com/events/277441540362049](https://www.facebook.com/events/277441540362049)

The manager of the Southside Arts District identified four African American businesses, one Indian, one Filipino-American, and one Malaysian. As she said, "The Southside is a true melting pot." So there are numerous other businesses owned or run by people of color.

All will be good places to visit on Small Business Saturdays.

### **Four African American businesses are:**

Lit's Coffee Roastery and Bakeshop (cafe), 26 E. Third St. Wed. - Sat. 9 to 2 p.m.

Melanie Lino, who runs the Bakeshop part of the business is African American. This business has top ratings and is a very appealing setting in which to enjoy coffee, tea and baked goods or a sandwich. In Oct. they featured 2 digital forums through Lafayette College on "Race and Space in the Lehigh Valley: Where We Are and Where We've Been"

Ava's Bargain Boutique, 412 E. 4th St. Mon - Fri 10 to 6 p.m./ Sat. 11 to 5 p.m.  
specializes in jewelry and accessories

Hot Plate Soul Kitchen, 201 E. 3rd St. Tues - Sat. 11 a.m. to 9 p.m./ Sun. 12:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
Caribbean cuisine and Southern Soul Food African American chef

Danielle's Cafeteria 738 E. 4th St.

Soul Food and Caribbean home cooking, Fish Fry Friday Comfort Thursday, and  
Soul Food Saturdays and Sundays

## PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO) Study on Charter Schools

Susan Spicka, Executive Director, Education Voters of PA

PASBO predicts that school district payments to charter schools will increase by \$474+ million in the 2020-21 school year. The estimate of total charter school tuition payments for 2020-2021 is \$2.76 billion. About \$125 million of this increase is not related to new enrollment. It is the result of a baked-in increase in tuition rates that is calculated in Pennsylvania's charter school law.

School districts also expect to pay an additional \$350 million in tuition because of an increase in enrollment in cyber charters of approximately 24,000 students. These are students who chose to leave school districts, brick-and-mortar charters, and private/religious schools to enroll in a cyber charter school this school year. PASBO has estimated cyber charter school enrollment increases and the total charter school tuition increases at the county level for 2020-21 and created a map to show the average increase in property taxes needed to fully cover the growth in charter school tuition costs for each county.

For example, if you click on Huntingdon County, you will see that there is an estimated increase of 92 students in cyber charter school enrollment. Taxpayers will spend **\$1.44 million** more in charter school tuition than in the prior year. To pay for this charter school tuition increase, school districts in Huntingdon County will need to **raise property taxes an average of 8.04%**.

PASBO Press Release: As one of the fastest growing mandated costs that school districts grapple with, charter school tuition costs increase each year as a result of the charter school tuition calculation itself and increased charter school enrollment. Charter school tuition costs increased by \$1.4 billion between 2013-14 and 2018-19. **Since there is no state funding or subsidy to school districts for charter school tuition costs, these cost increases are largely paid for by property taxes—with the average school district spending (after covering increases in special education costs) 44 cents of each \$1 of new property taxes between 2013-14 and 2018-19 on charter school tuition increases.**

As school districts navigate the many health, safety, educational and financial challenges of operating in a pandemic, the \$475 million increase in charter school tuition zeroes out most of the federal funds provided to schools under the CARES Act. For many school districts, this charter school cost increase exceeds the amount that their Act 1 Index rate can raise in property taxes.

**What must happen to prevent increased cyber charter school tuition costs from harming our public schools and forcing substantial property tax increases for the 2021-22 school year?**

State and federal lawmakers must provide additional aid to school districts that will help mitigate the staggering increase in cyber charter school tuition costs.

**If school districts do not receive additional aid this school year, they will be forced to make large cuts in programs, teachers and services for students and property tax increases and/or drain their fund balances for their 2021-22 budgets.**

In the long term, state lawmakers must support charter school funding reforms to rein in charter school costs to districts. The current funding system is unsustainable.



## **Group Information :**

**Diversity: Deeds and Dialogue:** Members of this group come from the Bethlehem, Easton and Allentown branches. This group is concerned with social action as well as social justice. The group decided to try a new model. Over at least the next 6-8 months, the group will be using the free publication *Anti-racism Daily*. Two members will identify topics from among the Daily's publication and lead the discussions. Each new pair also will be responsible for handling the logistics of running the group--sending out agendas, following up, etc. Using various media, the group examines the role of society in the problems of diverse populations (age, gender, race, ability and religion). If you have questions, please contact Rosemary [robaker356@gmail.com](mailto:robaker356@gmail.com)

**Bacchae:** After our meeting on Nov 12, Bacchae has decided to hold another Zoom meeting on December 10 at 7:00. Claire Ressler and Rita Bergstrom will be co-hostesses and will deliver the wine tasting kits prior to the meeting. Please note that this is an additional meeting added to our normal schedule. Our January meeting will also be on Zoom on January 14 at 7:00. Joann Kelly and Joanne Wagner will serve as co-hostesses and deliver the wine kits. We will continue to have Hostesses' Choice for our tastings. Any questions, please contact Phyllis Wargo.

**Mystery Paperback:** The Mystery Book Club will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021 at 1:30 PM. Our book this month is "The Satapur Moonstone" by Sujata Massey and Shirley Daluisio will lead the discussion. New members are always welcome. Contact Mary Dawson for more information

**Paperback I :**Paperback I is online. January 18 at 1:30 p.m. we will be discussing The Vanishing Half by Britt Bennett and on Feb. 15 we will be disussing The Country of Women by Susan Straight. Please contact Myra Saturen [myra125@hotmail.com](mailto:myra125@hotmail.com) with any questions.

**Paperback II:** PPBII BOOK GROUP will not meet in December. We will resume our meetings in 2021.

Next meeting is Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 7:00pm. We have to pick a hostess, we may be doing a Zoom meeting. More info to come on that subject. Our book for January is "News Of The World" by Paulette Jils. We all look forward to meeting in person. We welcome new members. My contact cell # 610-392-0891 My email address is: [jmfwagner@live.com](mailto:jmfwagner@live.com) Joanne Wagner, PPBII BOOK GROUP Leader

**Out to Lunch Bunch:** Cindy and Joan look forward to organizing a lunch as soon as it's safe to eat in a restaurant again. Until then, stay safe everyone. Cindy Huhn and Joan Howe



### ***Join me in welcoming our latest member !***

Our newest member is Margaret (Meg) Denzel. Meg was invited to view our Zoom presentation with Marie Bachman on Saturday and took advantage of this The Shape the Future event to join. Meg's hobbies include reading and traveling and enjoys spending time with her grandchildren. Meg is a retired Librarian. Welcome, Meg!

**The manager of the Bethlehem Southside Arts District identified, one Indian, one Filipino -American, and one Malaysian small business to remember on Small Business Saturdays. As she said, "The Southside is a true melting pot." So there are numerous other businesses owned or run by people of color.**

Jenny's Kualì 102 East 4th Street Mon - Thurs noon to 7 p.m./ Fri. - Sat. noon to 9 p.m.  
Delicious Malaysian food with vegetarian and vegan options  
Owned and operated by Jenny and Roy Lim with their children Mei Yi and Ka Seng  
Kualì means wok

Color Me Mine 25 E. 3rd St. noon to 6 p.m.  
An arts and crafts store for children and adults. Operated by an Indian woman

Homebase 29 West 4th St. Tues. -Thurs. noon to 7 p.m./ Fri & Sat. noon to 8 p.m./Sun. 11 to 6  
Skateboards, apparel, shoes Run by Filipino-American Andy Po  
Excellent article about Andy Po: <https://lehighvalleystyle.com/people/features/andy-po/>

**All will be good places to visit on Small Business Saturdays.**

And while you are in Southside Bethlehem, there is an **exhibit of Historic Civil Rights Photos at the Lehigh University Art Gallery in Zoellner Arts Center until May 2021**. To see the exhibit, contact the Arts Center. Twenty of the photos have been made into oversized reproductions and placed along the Greenway which is a paved path along the former Norfolk Southern rail line. It can be accessed via several grade crossings of the local streets.

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