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Frances Bentkowski

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Bethlehem Bylines Brief

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MAY 2021

And the Award goes to...

Outstanding Woman: Beth Corroda

Beth, a member since 2005 has always been an enthusiastic member, with an outstanding record of attending numerous branch board and state meetings. She has served two terms as Finance Officer and currently serves as the Editor for the Bethlehem Bylines Brief. During the recent pandemic, she was always there to get out the news to the homebound and quarantined members, and kept it light hearted and entertaining. Beth strives for excellence..



Member Making a Difference; Amy Fields



After spending many years as a school nurse, most recently at Calypso school, Amy retired and joined our branch. Since joining in 2016, she has stepped up to help our branch remain vibrant, volunteering for jobs that needed to be done. She has worked diligently at Book Fair, is active in Bacchae study group, and served on the membership committee where she actively recruited new members. Most recently she has stepped up to serve as co-chair of Book Fair.

Named Gift Honorees : Nancy Disario and Karen Donald

Nancy has served as Membership Vice President, twice as Chair of Nominating Committee, on Scholarship Committee and as co- chair of the Book Fair for 5 years and co-chair of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Book Fair. She is also an Honorary Life Member. Karen has served as Finance Officer, on the Scholarship Committee and as co- chair of the Book Fair for 5 years and co-chair of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Book Fair. Nancy and Karen have remained faithful to the branch, continuing to serve as Captains for the Book Fair and as Section Chairs, membership in Study Groups and attending branch meetings.



The Awards Committee offers our congratulations to these deserving women who live the mission of AAUW.

Linda Robbins, Chair
Linda Zimmerman
Anne Hammersmith

Executive Team Message — A YEAR OF RESILIENCE AND INGENUITY

As we come to the end of our AAUW 2020-2021 fiscal year, we look back at a year of sadness and disruptions, but also a year of resilience and ingenuity. Who knew we would be ordering groceries online, making our own pizzas, or ordering complete meals for Take Away? AAUW-Bethlehem has been as resilient as each of its members. We are familiar with the phrase “It takes a village....” Here are just a few of our Bethlehem Branch *villagers* who helped make our 2020-2021 year extraordinary.

In September, **Shirley Daluisio** insured that each member received our annual Yearbook, so important this year to enable us to reach out to each other. Communications Chair, **Linda Robertson**, and Bylines Brief Editor, **Beth Corroda**, worked together to ensure that the Branch was kept up to date on our *virtual* activities. Book Fair Co-Chairs, **Rita Bergstrom** and **Amy Fields**, and their Book Fair Committee, prepared for the possibility that our 2021 Book Fair would be held in April as planned, until, in February, it had to be postponed once again. They continue to deal with all things “Book Fair” in preparation for 2022. **Fran Bentkowski** and her Scholarship Committee made preparations for our senior high school girls’ scholarship interviews, until these also were cancelled for another year.

However, the Committee insured that scholarships to our non-traditional, adult college students will be awarded. Nominating Chair, **Debbie Spinney**, and her Nominating Committee, found willing officers to replace our outgoing Executive Membership Team. **Trisha Moller**, College Liaison, was instrumental with the Moravian College Branch Program in February. Trisha has the additional function of being our Facebook Administrator. Our Website Master, **Madison Scarfaro**, kept our website, our “first impression” to potential members, colorful and readable. Our Coordinator for Public Policy, **Joan Howe**, wrote articles for the Bylines Brief about National and State legislative actions, distilling numerous emails and publications for our membership. Above all, I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work done by our **Study Groups** to maintain their meeting schedules through ZOOM, and with special acknowledgment to **Bacchae**, our wine group, who went the extra mile to ensure a *normal* wine-tasting experience.

Our Executive Team has strived to maintain an authentic AAUW-Bethlehem experience. Our Program Co-Vice Presidents, **Olga Conneen**, **Mary Lou Vernon**, and **Phyllis Wargo** planned on-topic Branch Programs. As pandemic protocol continued to prohibit in-person meetings, these were switched to *virtual* via ZOOM with the technical support of **Linda Zimmerman**. Incidentally, we had more attendees at each of this year’s programs than in past years.

Membership Co-Vice Presidents, **Ann Brown**, **Amy Fields**, and **Mary Dawson** encouraged branch members to welcome new members and solicited guests to our Branch Programs to become members. Ann wrote several pieces for the Bylines Brief to clarify member issues, such as National, State and Branch voting issues and procedures.

Finance Officer, **Linda Robbins**, kept the Branch on budget, filed our taxes, updated our insurance, and managed our dues collection, among her other essential duties. She organized the Branch Awards Committee and was responsible for our Branch obtaining its first STAR in the National AAUW 5-Star Program. In the past few months, we have acquired 3 additional STARS and we hope to have our 5th and final STAR by June. See <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/5-star-program/> for details.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I wish to thank each and every one of **YOU** for the big and little things you did this year to bring friendship to each other, smiles to *Virtual* faces, and optimism to our *village* in this year of anxiety.

Cathy Kotanchik,
Executive Team Secretary

GATEWAY to EQUITY AWARD

RACHEL GRIFFITH — Owner of the Apollo Grill



Rachel Griffith, a Bethlehem native, a Moravian College graduate, and a thirty-five year old mother of a young child, is truly a driving force for success in Bethlehem. Rachel has been part of the highly successful Apollo Grill for over ten years. She began as a manager, then the general manager and is now the owner. She leads a team of mostly women including a female executive chef as well as females on the dinner hot line, cold line and waitstaff which is unusual in the restaurant industry. She has said that “we all share the same passion, drive and determination to make the best of the lives we live- and the lives we touch.” She has striven to keep everyone on the payroll during this time of COVID and, at the same time, has launched a Generation Next Scholarship Fund created by the non-profit Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, to assist Lehigh Valley minority students with access to college. Helping non-profits and groups with needs is something the Apollo does on a regular basis through special event nights. Rachel Griffith shows that a dedicated woman is a strong force for both success in business and for service to the community.

BOOK FAIR UPDATE: Plans for Book Fair 2022 Underway !!

We all know, Book Fair 2020 and 2021 were cancelled because of Covid-19.

In the meantime, meetings have been held with the City of Bethlehem planning future Book Fair dates at the Municipal Ice Rink.

Beginning Book Fair, 2022, we are able to rent the Ice Rink beginning the first week of April; the following 3½ weeks are for accepting donations, sorting and setting up, followed by 5 days for our sale. The sale will always be for 5 days from the last Thursday in April to the following Monday.

Having this agreement with the City means we can plan for future Book Fair dates and any PR and advertising can be arranged in plenty of time. AAUW members can confidently mark their calendars and arrange their vacations and other events around Book Fair, if they choose.

Since the end of Book Fair, 2019, we have been contacted by members of the community who have books that needed a “home”. These may be from a deceased family member’s home or the person may be moving and need a place for discarded books. We have accepted the donations and they are stored in other members’ basements and garages. Sometime this spring, we hope to remove and discard the plastic shelving from the storage shed that was used when our Book Fair was in the Pool Building. This will give us room to put the donated books in the storage shed. If you would like some of the shelving, please contact Rita or Amy as soon as possible.

*We hope the last year has been healthy for everyone and
that we will all be vaccinated and ready for Book Fair 2022.*

Rita Bergstrom
Amy Fields
Book Fair Co-Chairs



Program Committee Message

The final branch meeting for the year was April 20 on Zoom. Not only did we have 25 members attend, but also one of those members was ***Honorary Lifetime Member Marge Gottshall*** who Zoomed with us from her home in Holland, Michigan. What a nice surprise that was! It was wonderful seeing her and having time to chat with her again.

After voting to approve the slate of officers for 2021--2022 (see Membership Message article for details), Linda Robbins, Linda Zimmerman and Anne Hammersmith of the Awards Committee announced the award recipients. The Branch Outstanding Woman of the Year is Beth Corroda, and the Member Making a Difference is Amy Fields. The Named Gift Honorees are Nancy Disario and Karen Donald, also Rachel Griffin is the recipient of the Gateway to Equity Award.

Ann Brown presented the details of the AAUW National Elections, which opened on April 7, and closes on May 17. Remember to vote either online or by mail. If you have an email on file with our AAUW branch, you should have received an email from Shannon Wolfe on April 7, which provides details of voting online (including your ID number and a PIN needed to vote). If you do not have an email on file, you can request a ballot by mail by calling 800-326-2289.

During the open chat time, we asked questions, discussed AAUW national's open membership proposal, and heard about some interesting things members learned during this pandemic year. We also talked about the disappointment of not having Book Fair. The real disappointment was not being able to award scholarships to the high school students again this year. Fran Bentkowski suggested that perhaps we could present a monetary award to one girl from each school in lieu of scholarships this year. That way we could at least continue our tradition of giving.

We also appreciated hearing ideas from members about what kinds of programs they would like for next year. Some suggestions were a show at PA Playhouse (we will try again!), museum tours, concerts at local outdoor venues, as well as programs on climate change, local authors or women leaders in business. If you have any ideas, please contact the program committee---we would love to hear from you any time! In addition, we hope that next year will see us moving in a better direction into some kind of normalcy. It has been a challenging year for all of us, and the committee wants to thank you for your kind words and for being supportive of us as we forged ahead together on this journey.

Please remember there is no May meeting. Have a great summer!

Primary Election

The PA Primary Election is May 18. Vote by Mail ballots should be mailed out soon. If you didn't request one, remember to VOTE in person. Off year primaries don't get much publicity, yet they are very important. Locally, there are elections for mayors, commissioners, city and county councils and school boards. Statewide, there are important judicial elections and ballot issues.

This May we will be voting on three proposed amendments to the PA Constitution. Ballot Questions 1 and 2 deal with limiting the Governor's powers during a state of emergency. These ballot questions came about due to the Republican majority's frustration with Governor Wolf's response to the COVID pandemic. I always question ballot issues that are not bipartisan. Administrations change, legislative power changes, but the constitution is final. I also worry about how changes to the constitution might also affect the balance of power. I've written about how Harrisburg functions, or doesn't function. In an emergency, do you want the governor to be able to act quickly, or have decisions tied up for extended time in the General Assembly?

Ballot Question 3 is fine. It deals with prohibiting freedom from discrimination based on race or ethnicity. It's not really needed as the constitution already has these provisions. However, it was included on the ballot to make Questions 1 and 2 more positive. It's always good to question why proposals get on the ballot. PA League of Women Voters has good information on these issues. Check it out. I'm happy to assist anyone with ballot questions.

VOTE MAY, 18!!!!!!

Joan Howe, Public Policy

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

Bacchae: Bacchae will meet next on Zoom on May 13 at 7:00 pm to chat and make final plans for our end of year activity. Our usual May dinner will not be held this year, but an outdoor meal and possible wine tasting will be held sometime in June instead. Any questions? Please contact Phyllis Wargo.

Mystery Paperback: Attention all mystery lovers! The Mystery Book Club will meet on Tuesday, May 25, at 1:30PM to discuss "The Witch Elm" by Tana French. Mary Dawson will lead our discussion and we are hoping we will be able to meet in person for the first time in more than a year. New members are welcome. Please contact Mary for more information.

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

Paperback I: Please contact Myra Saturen for information regarding the May meeting. New members are always welcome. myra125@hotmail.com

Paperback II: PPBII BOOK GROUP PPBII BOOK GROUP will meet in person for their May meeting on Tuesday, May 18 at 7:00pm. Our hostess is Rita Bergstrom. The book for May is "Love Medicine" by Louise Erdrich and our reviewer is Deb Spinney. Please let Rita know if you can attend the meeting-610-365-2566. We always welcome new members; if you are interested in joining our group contact me at: joanneflechwagner@gmail.com
Happy Reading! Joanne Wagner

Membership News

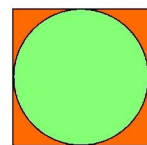
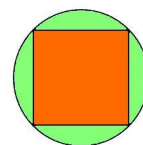
During our April 20 Zoom program, our Branch voted to approve Linda Robbins as Finance Officer. We are happy to welcome new board members, Nan Faust and Kathy Kahler, as Membership Vice Presidents and approved Ann Brown to a second term as a Membership Vice President.

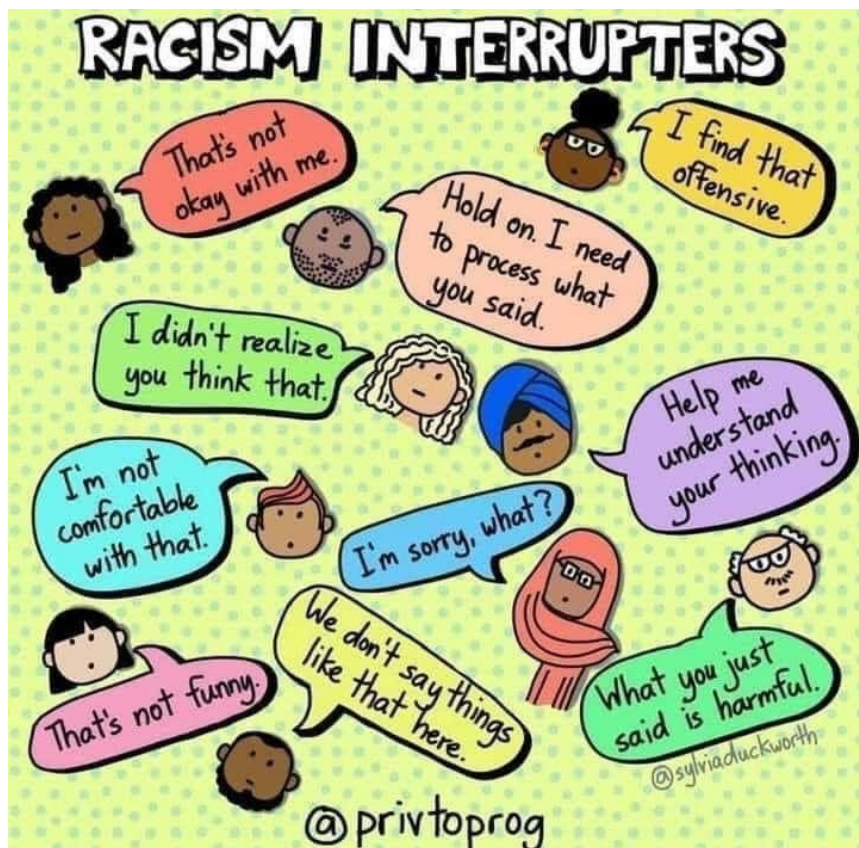
We are currently in the process of voting in the AAUW National Elections. All members have an opportunity to vote on the slate of officers to the National Board of Directors, public policy, and bylaw changes for Open Membership through May 17. National strongly recommends the elimination of the degree requirement for membership in AAUW. A short PowerPoint presentation reviewed some of the talking points for this change. Discussion followed on the topic of Open Membership. Will our name change?

Will our name still mean the same if we no longer require a higher education degree. One member's suggestion; the American Association of United Women would be a good fit. For now however, there will be no name change, and we wait for the national election results later in May.

If we learned one thing from this past year, we learned to think outside the box and be creative. We had to find new ways to communicate and stay in touch with family and friends. We had to adapt. Change is not always bad, just sometimes uncomfortable.

The Square said to the Circle, "You will have to change to fit into our system." The Circle replied, "Maybe the system has to change so we all can fit."





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