



Bethlehem Bylines Brief

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A Voice for Women and Children

3RD STREET
ALLIANCE

Board of Directors

Executive Team

Finance Officer
Linda Robbins

Vice Presidents - Programs
Linda Federico
Kristina Hollingsworth

Vice Presidents- Membership
Kathryn Kahler
Cathy Kotanchik

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Joanne Wagner

Coordinators

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Linda Robbins

Book Fair
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Debbie Spinney

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Olga Conneen

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and
Belonging
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On March 2, AAUW Members and guests from the Moravian Community gathered at Moravian Village to listen to Alisa Baratta, Executive Director of 3RD Street Alliance, located in the historic Simon Mansion in downtown Easton, PA.

With a mission to “inspire and equip women, children, and families to live, learn, and thrive,” Alisa Baratta explained the obstacles and goals to achieving this mission. “Third Street Alliance provides robust, targeted solutions that build long-term housing, economic and educational stability for our community. Women, children, and their

families who are at risk for or experiencing a housing crisis find solutions through our homeless prevention, shelter, housing, and economic stabilization programming. While our services are wrapped in compassion, our end goal is to ensure women, children, and families are equipped with the tools and resources that enable them to live, learn, and thrive with resiliency.”

There is a lack of affordable housing in the Lehigh Valley, and 3RD Street Alliance services assist people in housing crises, seeking shelter and providing financial assistance to help maintain current housing needs. A question-and-answer period provided more details and explained how we can help. Volunteering at events, reading to students, collecting products for the programs, and donating are ways to support this worthy program. Ann Brown



Thank you to Ann Brown for this excellent commentary on our March 2nd program. We had about fifteen AAUW members attend the March 2nd program. We invited Moravian Village residents and it was nice to see quite a few attend and participate. It is disappointing to have so few of our 80+ members take an interest in our programs. What does it say when a speaker is invited to give a presentation and a fraction of our members attend? We are already planning programs for the coming year and hope they will interest more members and inspire them to attend.

PROGRAM VP'S: Kristina Hollingsworth and Linda Federico



On March 9, 2024, a special meeting was held at 1:00 pm at Moravian Village Main Dining Room. There were 25 Branch members in attendance. The meeting was moderated by Joanne Wagner, Secretary, Executive Committee. The purpose of the meeting, as advertised in *the Bethlehem Bylines Brief*, was to discuss a Resolution proposed by Debbie Spinney to the Executive Committee in August, 2023. Cathy Kotanchik, Co-Vice President of Membership, took Minutes.

Joanne Wagner read the Proposal to the audience:

RESOLVED: that 20% of the annual net proceeds of the AAUW Used Book Fair (the “Book Fair”) shall be designated for the use by the Branch to further its educational purposes. 80% of the net proceeds from the Book Fair shall be used for scholarships as determined by the Scholarship Committee.

Since Debbie Spinney was unable to attend the meeting, Rita Bergstrom gave the opening statement in support of the Proposal. Rita said the history of the proposal sprang from a Book Fair Committee meeting last year. She said the Committee was told by the Finance Officer that they were coming close to using up their budgeted funds. For that reason, the proposal was made to make more of the net proceeds available to the Branch.

Rita also said that an Alternate Proposal was emailed to the members of the Executive Team. This proposal read:

RESOLVED, that 20% of the annual net proceeds from The AAUW Used Book Fair (the “Book Fair”) shall be designated for use by the Branch to further its educational purposes. 5% of the annual net proceeds from the Book Fair shall be sent to National AAUW. 75% of the net proceeds shall be used for scholarships as determined by the scholarship Committee.

Joanne Wagner informed Rita that this Alternate Proposal was not a matter to be addressed at this meeting.

Linda Robbins, Finance Officer, assured the audience that the Branch’s finances were in good shape. There seemed to be confusion between budgeted funds and actual funds.

Cathy Kotanchik, Co-VP for Membership, then spoke against the proposal. She said that there is nothing in our Bylaws governing the distribution of the net proceeds from Book Fair. Rather it has been a long-standing tradition that the Branch make an annual contribution to National AAUW. Cathy went on to say that only about \$2M of the \$18M operating costs of National AAUW come from branch dues. The National organization depends on donations of an additional \$2M to help balance its budget. Cathy also gave statistics describing the amount of funds donated to National AAUW by other Pennsylvania branches. In 2020, York gave over \$16,000. Bethlehem was 5th in donations with a little over \$5,000. More than 20 branches gave at least \$1,000 or more. Cathy finished by saying what an important job the National organization does for women and girls.

Olga Conneen, asked about the percentages now used for the Book Fair net proceeds.

Cathy Kotanchik replied that several years ago, when she was President of the Bethlehem Branch, the elected officers met with the Finance Officer, at that time Beth Corroda, and chose a formula of 80% for scholarships, 10% for Branch and 10% for National AAUW. A subsequent Executive Team approved a budget changing this to 75%/15%/10%, which was how the 2023 donation to National AAUW was calculated.

Many members of the audience expressed their desire to discuss the Alternate Resolution. Cathy Kotanchik advised that, since the meeting was set up to discuss the original Resolution, the Alternate Resolution, which was sent to the Executive Committee by email in late February, was not on the Agenda for discussion.

Linda Robbins reminded the audience that the ballots requesting a “Yes” or “No” vote from the members were printed in January and were mailed to Branch members the morning of the meeting.

There was spirited discussion about how much the annual contribution should be, requests for a more moderate proposal, questions about how Resolutions should be proposed, Roberts Rules of Order, and Branch Policies and Procedures.

The votes will be counted on April 5th and the results of this secret ballot will be announced at the General Meeting (Sup ‘n Shop) later in April.

Cathy Kotanchik said that If the Branch vote is against the Proposal, the Executive Committee will discuss other proposals on Monday, April 8th, the date of the next Executive Team meeting. Joanne Wagner adjourned the meeting at 2:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Kotanchik, Co-VP of Membership



The Executive Team will meet at The Clubhouse Grille at the Bethlehem Golf course on Monday, April 8th at 12 noon for lunch. After lunch we will conduct our business meeting at the Clubhouse Grille. If any member would like to attend our business meeting please contact me and I will put you on our agenda for a specific time slot. You can email or text me or call me. My phone number and email address is in the Yearbook.
Thank you, Joanne Wagner

Membership Matters

Hello ladies (or however you identify),

We are in the final days before the most anticipated event of the year, BookFair.

As always, the membership committee will set up our display on or near the snack bar area. We have a beautiful poster board (courtesy of Ann Brown) and informational materials for prospective members.

Cathy Kotanchik and I will provide as much coverage as we can. We'd appreciate it if anyone noticing interest in the display would engage the person just for a minute. A smiling face is much better at attracting people than posters are.

There are also potential members, or those in the process of joining, who plan to assist. Keep an eye out for them also. Several of them, we already know from past years but there will be new faces too. Looking forward to seeing you all.

submitted by, Kathy Kahler



Women's Reproductive Rights



Most of us no longer have to worry about reproductive rights for ourselves, but our daughters, granddaughters, nieces, etc. sure do. For 50 years we had government guidelines that insured every woman had the rights to choose if and when she wanted to have children. It was a medical issue discussed with her doctor. In June of 2022 the Supreme Court overturned Roe v Wade. Within 6 months 26 states had banned abortion, or have passed legislation to severely limit access. It was no longer the women's right to choose. But it didn't stop there.

Now just 18 months later Alabama's Supreme Court ruled that a frozen embryo is a legally protected child under their state's Wrongful Death of a Minor Act of **1872**! A few days after fertilization the blastocyst has only around 200 cells. At 8 weeks the embryo is only an inch long. How is this a child?

This ruling has effectively banned IVF treatment for those parents faced with infertility issues. IVF became available in the 1980s. It wasn't an option for most of us. However, it definitely is an option for women today. 42% of American adults have used IVF or know someone who has. How fast will it take for more states to pass similar laws? Will a ban on birth control be next?

March is Women's History Month. There is no Men's History Month because men don't need one. They hold most of the power in this country. Men face no bans or restrictions on any area of their healthcare. In fact, many insurance policies help cover the costs for erectile dysfunction issues. Again and again, women's rights are restricted.

We do have government leaders trying to protect IVF for women. The Access to Family Building Act, led by House member Susan Wild and Senators Tammy Duckworth and Patty Murray, is making its way through congress. It establishes a statutory right to access IVF for every woman no matter what state they live in.

PA still allows women the right to choose and the right to seek IVF treatment. So, before you vote in the upcoming April 23rd Primary, please take the time to visit the websites of ALL the candidates. If strong Women's Reproductive Rights language is not at the top of their list of priorities, beware. Your daughter's, granddaughter's and niece's lives could be greatly affected.

Joan Howe, Public Policy

Marylou Vernon's IVF Experience

IVF can prevent many genetic diseases! My mother was a carrier for Kennedy's Disease, a progressive atrophy of all voluntary and involuntary muscles in the body. There was no IVF at that time, so my brother and 6 cousins had the disease and were in wheelchairs by age 35. My brother died recently because he could not lift his head, which cut off his air supply.

I was tested before my own children got married. I was not a carrier, a huge relief! But if I was, there would have been an option for them to have children free of Kennedy's disease. Because we have IVF! My cousins now have many healthy grandkids, too.

As it turns out, 3 of my 5 grandchildren were conceived via IVF because my daughters-in-law could not get pregnant. What a fabulous invention! Thank you, IVF, for Zoe, Miles and Madelyn!

Information :

BRANCH STUDY GROUPS

Bacchae: Our March meeting at Louise Wisser's home featured wines that she and Joanne Wagner chose from Hungary. But before we tasted them, we sipped another Hungarian drink that Louise had purchased earlier. It was considered a white wine (but was 40% alcohol), and we could feel the burn the second it passed our lips. What a surprise!

We then tasted and rated a 100% gruner veltliner white wine from Little Cricket winery in northeast Hungary and Bull's Blood, a smooth red wine made from the Kekfrankos grape, from the Egri Hills of north Hungary. Research suggested it would pair well with anything made with paprika. It has been interesting this year to taste wines made from grapes we had not been familiar with. Our next meeting on April 11 will be held at Linda Federico's home at 3:00 to taste two more wines on our "European Tour". Phyllis Wargo will serve as co-hostess. Any questions? Contact Phyllis Wargo.

Mystery Paperback: The Mystery Group does not meet in April. In May, Mary Dawson will lead the discussion of Barbara Nadel's *A Knife to the Heart* in which we will follow a very likable detective, characterized as "grumpy and unsociable... the Morse of Istanbul" as he seeks to solve a murder predicted by a Ouija board. We will meet at 1:00pm on Tuesday, May 28th and Olga Conneen will be our hostess.

Paperback I: Paperback I will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the home of Norma Ferguson. New members will be warmly welcomed. Call Mardi Metzger, her number is found in the year book. We will discuss *The Widow's War*, a novel by Sally Cabot Gunning. This is a historical novel set in a New England whaling village. Lyddie Berry's husband, a whaler, is lost at sea. Now she is a widow and the dependent of her son-in-law. Lyddie refuses to give her son-in-law all that she and her husband worked for and becomes an outcast in the village. She eventually develops a strong sense of self and finds love.

Paperback II: Eight members of Paperback II book group met at Linda Federico's home on Tuesday, March 19, 2024. Linda Zimmerman led a discussion of Drew Gilpin Faust's *Necessary Trouble*. This book was written by the first woman president of Harvard. She grew up just about the time that we did, experiencing life in the South, at boarding school, and then at Bryn Mawr. She was involved with civil rights in the South and protesting the Viet Nam War.

Our next meeting is April 16 at Linda Zimmerman's home. We will welcome Anne Supsic, author of *The Bookmark*, who will lead our discussion. The book is historic fiction about a nurse helping the Marquis de Layette convalesce in Bethlehem, PA after being wounded in the Revolutionary War. It will be a fun read as we recognize so many places and events from right here in our city! *The Paris Library* by Janet Skeslien Charles was chosen as our book for May.

Public Policy: Public Policy Study Group met on March 11th. Our small group had a great discussion on many topics; Democracies v Republics, pros and cons of Electoral College, pros of mail in ballots (get to study issues and candidates you didn't know were on the ballot), and Women's Reproductive Rights. We love the mottos: Educate and Activate and When You Know Better We Do Better! Contact Joan Howe if you would like to attend the next meeting April 8th 3:00 at Joan Howe's house, 3396 Michigan Ct.

Out to Lunch Bunch: OTLB met at Urbano Mexican Restaurant and Bar on Wednesday, March 13. Great food and great conversation from vacations to cleaning out houses - because our kids don't want our "stuff". A few even enjoyed their delicious margaritas!

Join us next month at the Clubhouse Grill at Bethlehem Municipal Golf Course on Illicks Mill Rd. We will meet there (just across the street!) after a full morning of work at Book Fair. Join us April 10, 2024 at 12:30. Please email Amy Fields at ajf219@rcn.com to reserve your chair!



Book Fair Update

Deb Spinney and Joan Howe have been working hard getting ready for this year's Book Fair. We met with our Section Chairs on March 12th. Everyone is excited to begin. It's lots of work, but it is also fun. It's a great way to get to know each other better. Tables arrive on April 1st and we begin collecting books for the community the next day. Our Kick-Off meeting is April 2nd at 10:00. All past volunteers have been invited. Sorting begins following the short meeting. We welcome all members to come and help out whenever you have time. We are there Mon.-Sat. 9-noon. Remember to bring gloves (dusty books) and your drink. Snacks to share are always welcomed. Section Chairs, remember to bring your name tags. Also, if you know anyone with "muscle" bring them along too.

Sup and Shop branch meeting is April 23rd 6-8:00. This is a great time to shop. In fact, Deb and Joan encourage you to shop. The money that we collect throughout the sorting process days and the evening of Sup and Shop is used for the cash boxes to make change on the first day of the sale.

Set your alarm! On April 25th Rita Bergstrom is being interviewed by WFMZ for their early morning show; 6:12, 7:12, 8:12am. She did a great job last year! Lots of customers said that's what reminded them to come to the sale.

Start spreading the word. Email all your contacts to <https://bethlehem-pa.aauw.net/book-fair/> to publicize the Book Fair. Joan Howe has the box of bookmarks. Contact her if you need some for your friends and neighbors.

See you all in April! Deb Spinney and Joan Howe Co-chairs Book Fair

Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers

April 23, 2024, at 6 p.m.

As we have done in past years, The Bethlehem Branch will hold its Annual General Meeting during the Sup and Shop program at the Bethlehem Ice Rink on Illicks Mill Road on April 23rd at 6:00 p.m. At this time, we will hold the election for Branch officers commencing their two-year positions on July 1, 2024. We have one nominee for each open position.

Secretary	Nan Faust
Vice-Presidents, Program	Fran Bentkowski
	Kristina Hollingsworth

We can accept nominees from the floor at the meeting, but please have the Branch member's agreement to be nominated beforehand.

FINANCIAL REVIEW BETHLEHEM AAUW

TO: Bethlehem AAUW
FROM: Susan Nenstiel, Auditor
RE: Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Review

I have examined the financial statements and records of Bethlehem AAUW for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. A review of receipts, disbursements, bank reconciliations, and monthly financial reports as provided by the finance officer was completed.

I concur with the balances as of June 30, 2023, as presented by the finance officer. For future reviews, I recommend that copies of the minutes from either the board or scholarship committee be included in supporting materials.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to conduct the review.

From the Finance Officer

Annual dues notices will be mailed on April 1 and must be received by June 1 to be included in Yearbook. *Please do not send dues directly to National* by check or credit card, regardless of mailings and emails. You may contact me with any questions.

Activities 1/1/24 - 3/31/24

- Participated in emails, discussions and preparation (handouts) for meeting on 3/9/24 and prepared ballot meeting.
- Made deposits, paid invoices, completed data entry and reconciliation, as well as financial reports, monthly. collected audit review.
- Submitted honorary life membership application to national.
- Hosted 2 awards meetings; determined candidates, researched bios and photos, submitted to state board for certificates and inclusion in Keystone
- Met with GTE candidate, and wrote articles for future Bylines.
- Discussion with Lehigh University student group concerning NCCWSL
- Mailed Bylines, scholarship checks, and prepared mailing for dues renewal.
- Hosted AAUW Bethlehem Executive Team meetings.
- Coordinated with Moravian Village and Program VPs for program sites.

Please be aware that my final term will end in 2025. If you have any interest in the position, please contact me.

Linda Robbins, Finance Officer



Happy
#NATIONALVOLUNTEERMONTH



Ann Brown
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